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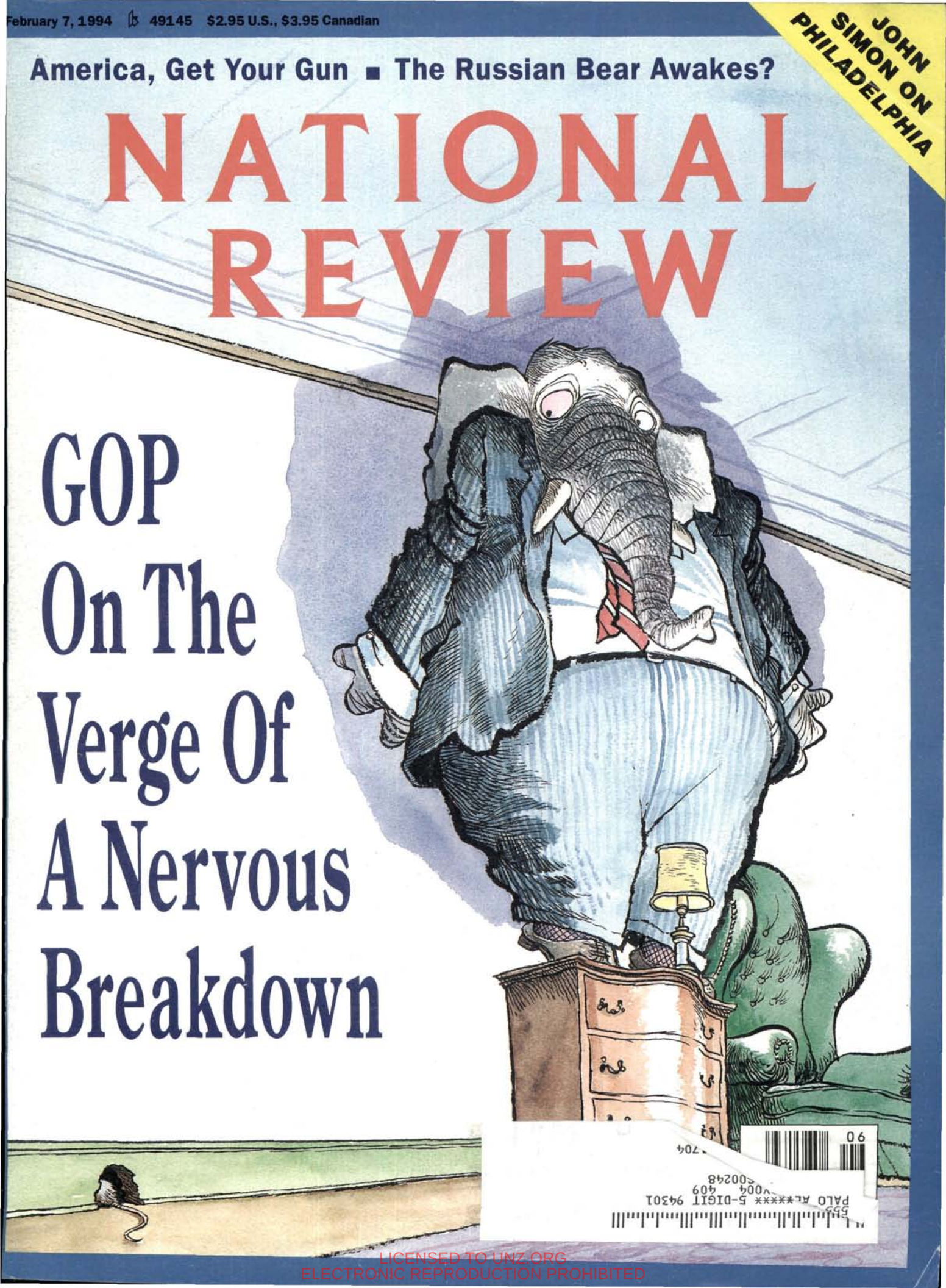
JOHN SIMON ON PHILADELPHIA

America, Get Your Gun ■ The Russian Bear Awakes?

NATIONAL REVIEW



GOP On The Verge Of A Nervous Breakdown

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The Big Bad Wolf

The Wicked Witch

The Thing Under the Bed

The Measles

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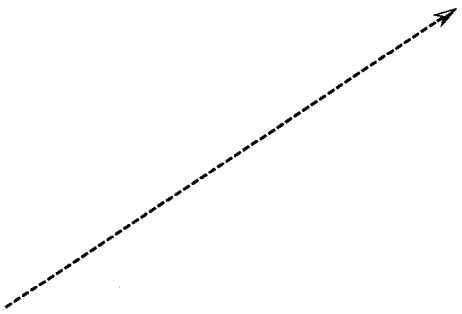

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NATIONAL REVIEW

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The Audit Bureau

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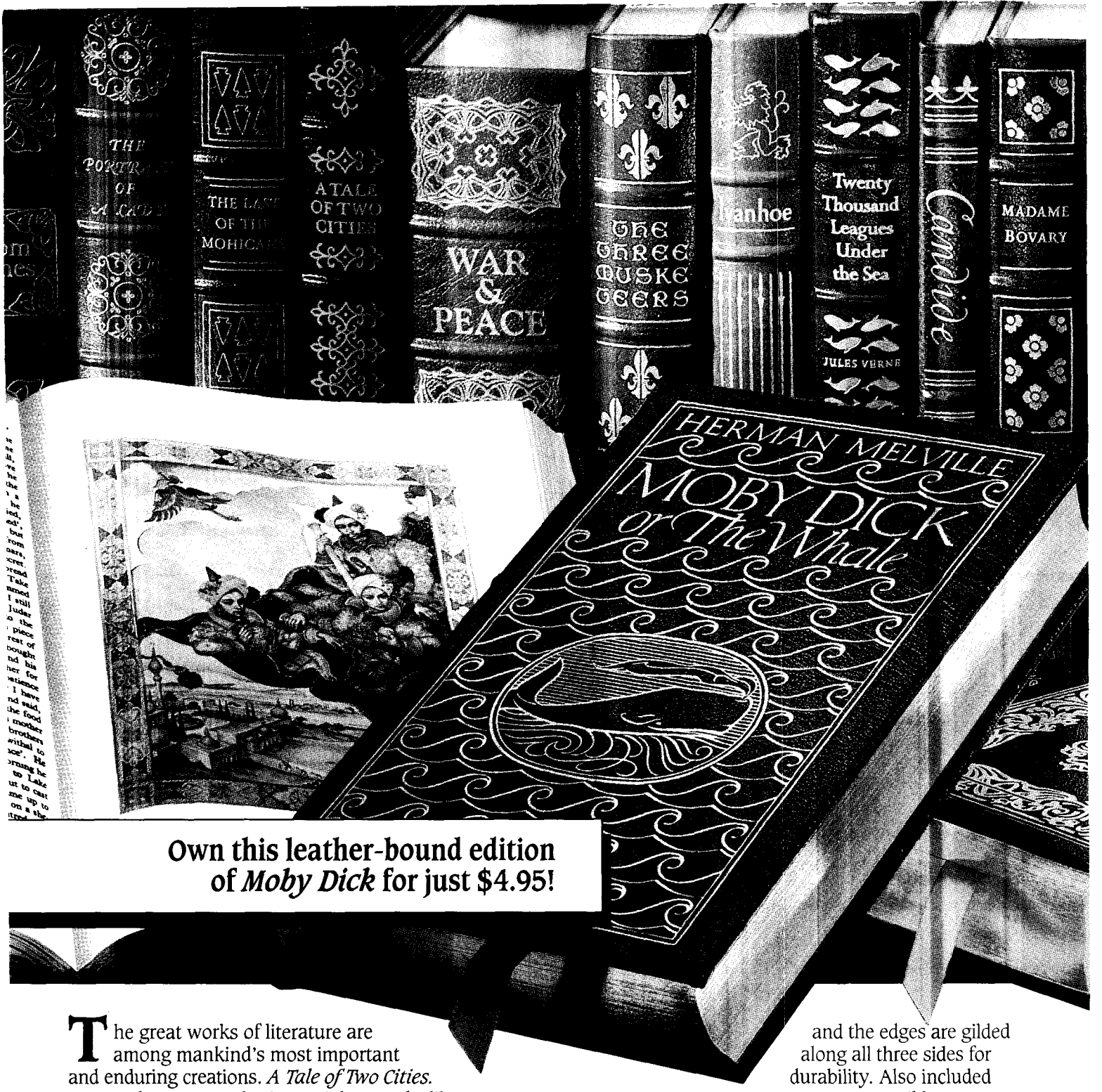

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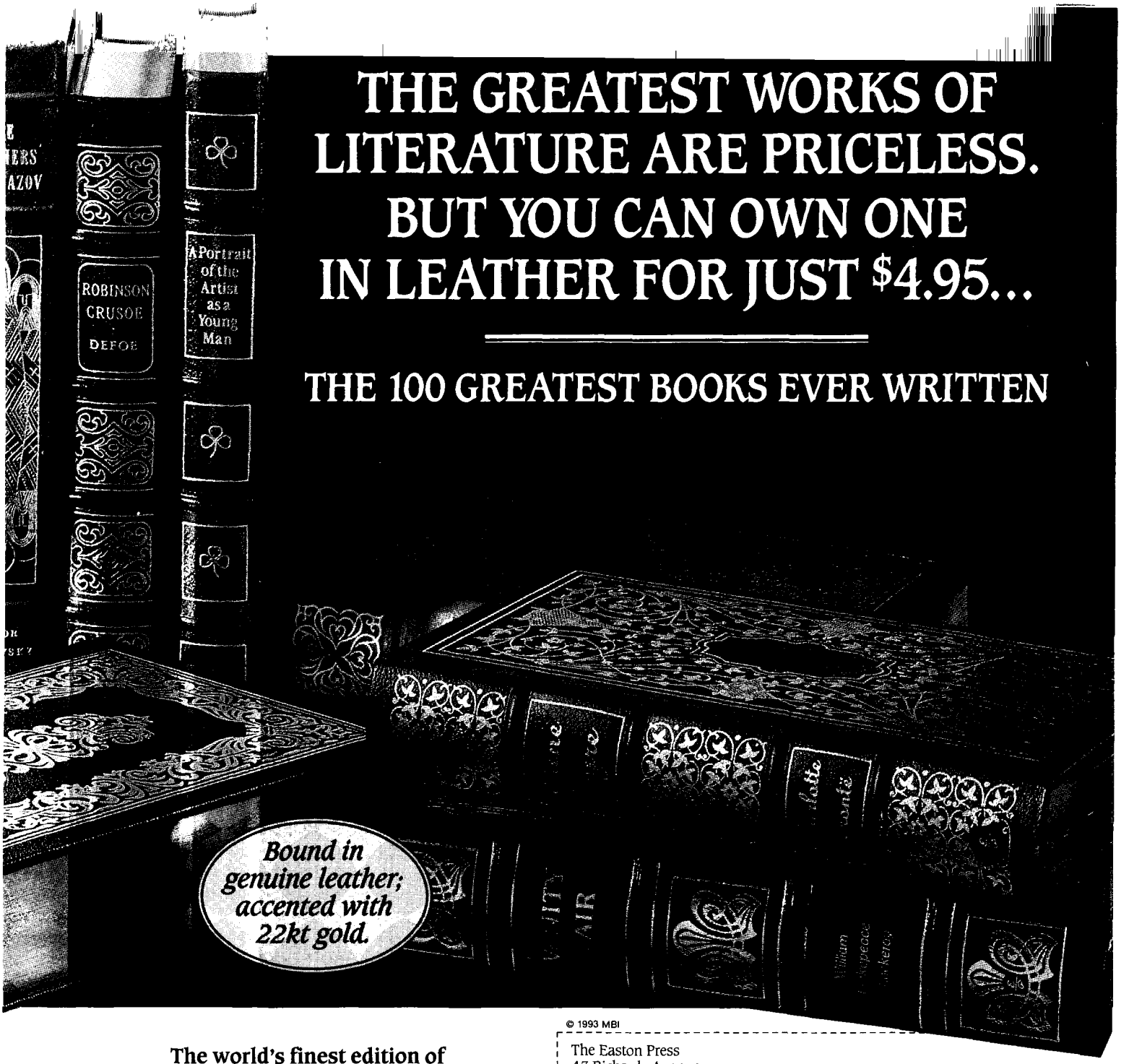

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LETTERS

Cause for Concern

Matthew Scully's report on my keynote speech at the American Cause conference ["When Everything Old Is New Again," Dec. 13] contains several errors that cry out for correction.

Never did I state that Germana Paraboschi was "alarmed by the neoconservatives." I quoted this commentator on the Straussians to underline my point that the disciples of Leo Strauss had stopped worrying about the "crisis of modernity" in order to celebrate the "democratic-capitalist end of History." Needless to say, the paleos do not believe that these celebrants are acclaiming either self-government or free markets, and these semantic differences have fueled conservative wars. I also did not state that conservative struggles are in fact a "fate without release." I merely noted what may be the perception of some observers. I then pointed out that much of this strife may come to an end in the foreseeable future, with the electoral ascendancy of the populist Right and the reintegration of the neocons into the center Left. I did not depict Bill Kristol, whose presence at an earlier American Cause conference I dutifully noted, as "the terror of the Republic." He was presented as a thoroughly innocuous representative of the Washington political class, one who trembles at the thought that our two-party system may be endangered by Perot or Buchanan.

My speech, moreover, was not a call to battle. It was a critical account of how the neoconservatives had been leading the Right and of why they were losing popular support among those they had tried to marginalize. At least some of this argument cropped up two weeks later, in an op-ed piece by Irving Kristol for the *Wall Street Journal*. Though Mr. Kristol and I have opposed interests on some matters, our views of the explosive power of the populist Right are identical. Last week, similar musings came up, in even more anguished form, in a column by David Broder. Like Kristol, Broder thinks the visionary aspect of the Right has become linked to nonglobalist, communal thinking. It is not I but Kristol and Broder who are forced to confront this agonizing reality.

As for who is closer to whom, Mr. Bennett has not criticized liberal Republican Bill Weld (his associate at Empower America) as harshly as he has fellow conservative Pat Buchanan, which suggests that Weld's views on abortion, feminism, and gay rights may not bother Bennett or Kemp to the same degree as Buchanan's views on immigration. Does Scully's implicit judgment about there being no differences on the Right as great as the gulf between Kemp or Bush and Clinton apply to the numerous distinguished neocons who became "conservatives for Clinton"? Yes, I did speak of Kemp as being closer to Clinton than to Buchanan, particularly in his nervous, obsessive sensitivity to the civil-rights

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lobby and liberal press. But I attributed this proximity not to wickedness but to Kemp's concern about protecting the flank that matters most to him—the left. Unlike Scully, I do not believe that Kemp simply "couldn't make it" to the conference. Anyone who believes that, as Lord Wellington said about another doubtful assertion, is liable to believe anything.

Paul Gottfried
Elizabethtown, Pa.

The first line of Mr. Gottfried's address reads: "Internal strife is becoming, for the American Right, a kind of fate without release." Some 17 pages later, we find him explaining this strife by citing "the same reason Thucydides gives for the struggle between Athens and Sparta: some were driven to expand their hegemony; and others to resist"—a melodramatic comparison typical of the five thousand words in between. I am not acquainted with the works of Germana Paraboschi, but I can attest that Mr. Gottfried did inform us of her alarm and "astonishment." (Alarm was my word, which is why I did not put it in quotes.) Mr. Gottfried similarly misquotes my paraphrase of a comment he made regarding Bill Kristol. What I correctly noted was that Mr. Gottfried had spoken of Kristol, as of other conservatives who have strayed from the Paraboschi standard, as if each were "a threat to the Republic."

Much as I admire Mr. Gottfried as a man of clear rectitude and insight, I think his letter confirms my point that he's too quick to flash the sword on allies like Bennett, Kemp, and Kristol. Despite pretty fair records of advancing conservative principles, they were derided again and again while only once did the name "Clinton" come up. This struck me, as it did Mr. Buchanan and his staff, as not the best use of a keynote address. —MS

The O'Sullivan Conspiracy

I find it remarkable that John O'Sullivan's "friend" should have sent him pages from my book, instead of the book itself ["From the Editor," Nov. 15]. More remarkable still is that Mr. O'Sullivan should have voiced skepticism about the book without mentioning either its title (*The Gingerbread Race*) or its publisher (Picador). If the aim is to prejudice the reader without allowing him to judge for himself, this is a conspiracy, defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as the "combination of persons for an evil purpose."

My book, by contrast, is not about conspiracies. It is about such conformity, infantilism, optimism, and myopia as pervade the American ruling elites; it is about the survival of the free thinker; about the hypocrisy of egalitarianism; and, last but not least, about the malevolent folly of those who would sell the inheritance of individual liberty for a mess of establishmentarian pottage. Alas, I count "Averell Harriman, George Bush, Bill Buckley, and other eminent Americans, working through the agency of the Skull & Bones society at Yale," among their number.

Since the charge is so grave, and the brush so full of tar, I excuse the reluctance of NATIONAL REVIEW to release its conservative readers from the partisan vice of its editor-at-large and have my book reviewed by an outsider, say somebody from *The Nation*. (Who knows, perhaps *The Nation* would then give Mr. Buckley space to reply. In the England of Mr. O'Sullivan's youth and Mr. Buckley's avowed sympathies, such a sequence of

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events would not be unusual.) What is inexcusable, under these circumstances, is the desire to have one's cake and eat it too, to smear the author but not to rebut him.

The title of *The Gingerbread Race* refers to a nursery rhyme. I would be contradicting the thesis of my book if I said that NATIONAL REVIEW's behavior was remarkable because it was uncharacteristic. On the contrary, it is remarkable because having one's cake and eating it too is the characteristic ambition of all badly behaved children, including those who rule America and edit its magazines.

Andrei Navrozov
London, England

Back to the Table

The morning after I read Richard John Neuhaus's review of my book *A Place at the Table* ["Table for One," Dec. 13], I attended a confirmation and reception service at my Episcopal church. At every such service, several Roman Catholics are received into the Episcopal fold. Most, in my experience, are gay. They are changing churches not because they want to sin and think that the Episcopal Church will be easier on them. They are doing so because the Roman Catholic Church has refused to understand and to deal honestly with what it means—socially, psychologically, and morally—for them to be gay and insists on discussing their circumstances in terms that have no relation to their experience. They know that they will be more likely to find in the Episcopal Church respect for the aspect of their lives that they know to be most touched by grace and to reflect most surely the love of Christ. The disjunction between what they know about themselves and the way in which some Catholic priests talk about it is too immense for them to abide for long without deep moral and psychological torment.

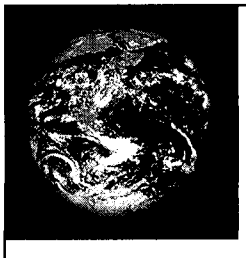
Father Neuhaus mocks the notion that accepting and being honest about one's own homosexuality is a moral act, an act of conscience. But it is. He also mocks the notion of gays as teachers about this subject and straights as students. Yet at the heart of this issue rests one simple fact: straight people *don't* know what it is like to be gay. Is it so absurd to suggest that even a priest can learn—and perhaps from a homosexual? Of course, Father Neuhaus doesn't want to learn. He systematically distorts my arguments and tone. NATIONAL REVIEW's illustration perfectly captured the image of me that he presents: that of a petulant fag at a "table for one." You would never know from his review that this is a book that many straight people have praised for its fairness and restraint, and that many gays (including several well-known conservatives) have described as resonating with them as nothing else has done. I've met a number of straight people who have bought multiple copies as gifts for young gays they know, and gays who have bought multiple copies for their straight friends and relatives in hopes that it might help those people to understand them.

Those gays—most gays—want to be understood. They want the straight people they love to recognize that they have not made a subversive or evil choice but rather have come to a difficult and brave understanding of themselves. Father Neuhaus mocks their yearning for reconciliation. "Gays R Us?" reads the *NR* cover line. Yet many contributors to *NR* and other conservative magazines are gay. Listen to us about our experience. Believe us. Trust us in this, as you do in other matters. What we are telling you is not (in Father Neuhaus's phrase) "gay ideology." It is the truth about our lives.

"Being true to oneself, in Christian perspective," wrote Father Neuhaus in *Freedom for Ministry*, "means to be true to the self one is called to be." My committed relationship has brought me closer than I have ever been to God, to the self I am called to be, and to the work I am called to do. I have never felt a greater sense of Christian purpose than while talking with people about *A Place at the Table*, and I know I could not have written it without the Holy Spirit's guidance and my partner's love. I know, too, that the book is reconciling parents to their gay children and helping young gays to understand their homosexuality. I feel blessed to have been able to do such work, and grieved that a churchman like Father Neuhaus sees it as an abomination.

Bruce Bawer
New York, N.Y.

Mr. Bawer's plaint got it quite wrong. I firmly resisted the temptation to mock his book. In fact, I wrote that it "is very much worth reading." I did point out its inconsistencies and contradictions. One must learn to expect such criticism when one makes arguments in public. (Although I had nothing to do with the NR *cover line and internal illustration, it seems Mr. Bawer is excessively sensitive on that score, too.) The statement in* Freedom for Ministry *turns on who is doing the calling. Mr. Bawer says that God calls him to be what he is and do what he does. I have no doubt that he sincerely believes that. As I have no doubt that churches that abandon two thousand years of clear and consistent teaching that homosexual activity is wrong will be attractive to some homosexuals who think such activity is right. It is also understandable that in his book Mr. Bawer relies heavily on the discredited gay revisionism of John Boswell regarding the history of Christian thought and practice. Further, I did not say Mr. Bawer's book is an "abomination." I argued that it is deeply confused and gravely mistaken. The issue is not acceptance or understanding but, as he adamantly insists in his book, moral approval. More precisely, he contends that those who do not morally approve do not accept or understand. I suggest that he is wrong about that. One can accept the person and understand the circumstance while disapproving of the behavior. Mr. Bawer's Christianity would be greatly enhanced by attention to the categories of sin, forgiveness, and grace for amendment of life. I concluded my review by observing that, for Mr. Bawer and other gays of like mind, "We must morally approve or else be counted as the enemy. . . . One hopes that they will reconsider." I continue to hope that. Meanwhile, I assure Mr. Bawer of my good will and prayers as he, along with the rest of us, seeks to discern more clearly who he is called to be.* —RJN



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FROM THE EDITOR

Sexual Exceptionalism

■ In this issue, we publish an exchange between Richard Neuhaus and Bruce Bawer on conservatives and homosexuality. There are, of course, several possible conservative attitudes on this subject. But most conservatives will favor tolerance toward individual homosexuals combined with a general social preference for heterosexuality (particularly in matters affecting children), whether rooted in religious belief or in social tradition.

Mr. Bawer dislikes this accommodation because it does not grant the moral approval he seeks. Until recently, he has enjoyed the full support of America's dominant liberal culture in this. But the twists and turns of sexual politics continue to baffle. Just when it seemed that any lack of enthusiasm for homosexuality was a disease called "homophobia," along comes Frank Rich of the *New York Times* to invent a new category—the politically incorrect homosexual. And what makes his invention especially radical is that the politically incorrect homosexual's incorrectness stems in part from his homosexuality.

Mr. Rich, the *Times* theater critic until his rebirth as an op-ed columnist, makes an unlikely skinhead. But some things are more important than combatting homophobia: in Mr. Rich's case, protecting feminist icons such as Hillary Clinton and Anita Hill from the iconoclasm of David Brock in *The American Spectator*.

Mr. Rich does not directly state that David Brock feels a revulsion toward women because he is gay. But his insinuations come very close to that. For instance, "The slightest sighting of female sexuality whips him into a frenzy of misogynist zeal."

It is when Mr. Rich deals with Mr. Brock's view of *men*, however, that he really smacks his lips. Mr. Brock apparently called President Clinton "a bizarre guy," when, says Mr. Rich, the charges of womanizing would make the President seem "all too pathetically ordinary." He goes on: "Mr. Brock's idea of a non-bizarre man is one of the troopers, Larry Patterson, whom he idolizes as a macho image of abstinence." I have no idea what a macho image of abstinence would look like, but it certainly sounds impressive. So what did Mr. Brock write? Larry Patterson is "tall and trim, with the upright demeanor and closely cropped hair of a military officer." Wow. I apologize to any of our gay readers who have been inconveniently disturbed in a public place. Mr. Rich may disbelieve the hearsay evidence on which the Brock article sometimes relies; he may very reasonably find the whole topic distasteful; but he is not entitled on those grounds to distort Mr. Brock's essay in order to accuse Mr. Brock of distortion, still less distortion rooted in his sexuality.

Indeed, Mr. Rich's criticism reminds me of a reply by Ferenc Molnar to critics of his collected plays: "Apparently Hungarians who can write outnumber those who can read."

Mr. Brock has never discussed his private life in his writings. As a result of the *Times* column, however, he was asked about his sexuality, and replied that he was indeed gay. Having written about other people's private lives, Mr. Brock is perhaps ill-placed to complain about this intrusion. Still, it is a matter of record that he was "outed" by the *New York Times*.

This landmark in liberal journalism establishes three new rules. 1) Rampant heterosexuality is usually a bad thing—except when it might damage liberals, when it becomes "ordinary." 2) Homosexuality is usually a good thing—except when it might damage a conservative, when it becomes "misogynist zeal." 3) "Macho abstinence" is good under rule one, and bad under rule two, except when the exceptions apply.

Meanwhile, the episode has given us a new collective noun for columnists on the *New York Times*—an embarrassment of Riches.

—JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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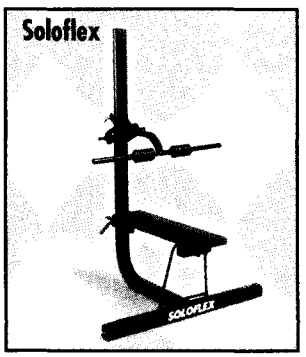

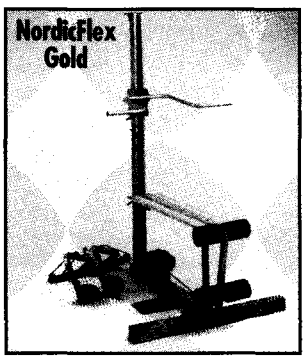

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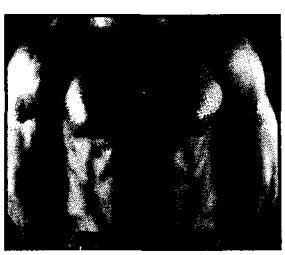

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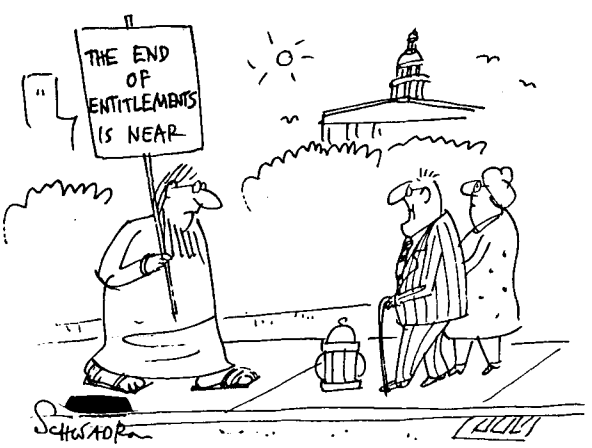
FOR THE RECORD

■ Health care vs. welfare. On *Meet the Press*, Sen. **Pat Moynihan** agreed with swelling Republican chorus that there is no health crisis. Earlier, Moynihan had threatened to slow **Hillary Clinton**'s health package if welfare reform landed on back burner. . . . Appointment of left-winger **Harold Ickes** as point man on health reform worries moderate Democratic Leadership Council's **Al From**, **Dave McCurdy**, and **John Breaux**. . . . Connecticut Sen. **Joe Lieberman**, also of DLC, plans to introduce bill authorizing states to follow **Charles Murray**'s counsel and end welfare immediately. . . . Sign of movement on welfare: **Bill Clinton** approvingly quoted from a Murray *Wall Street Journal* op-ed and added: "I think his analysis is essentially right." . . . Even HHS Secretary **Donna Shalala** goes along with some elements of Murray's thesis: "I don't like to put this in moral terms, but I do believe that having children out of wedlock is just wrong." . . . If hopeful signs do not turn into congressional action, Republicans are talking about using discharge petition to flush out Democrats who talk right but secretly vote for status quo. . . . GOP also plans to write letter to Ways & Means Chairman **Dan Rostenkowski** urging action, say **Evans & Novak**. . . . Soon-to-be House Minority Leader **Newt Gingrich** gets right to the point: "You can't maintain a civilization with 12-year-olds having babies and 15-year-olds killing each other and 17-year-olds dying of AIDS and 18-year-olds getting diplomas they can't read. . . . The challenge of our generation is to replace the welfare state." . . . Good sign: *NR* Senior Editor **William Bennett**'s tough new *Book of Virtues* is Number One on January 16 *New York Times* best-seller list.

■ **Dick** and **Lynne Cheney** don't want to run for **Malcolm Wallop**'s Wyoming Senate seat, neither does ex-**Reagan** Interior Secretary **James Watt**, opening way for two-term Rep. **Craig Thomas**. . . . In Utah, popular Democratic Rep. **Bill Orton** says he won't challenge Sen. **Orrin Hatch** despite favorable polls. . . . Ex.-Sen. **Bill Brock** (R., Tenn.) contemplating race against Sen. **Paul Sarbanes** (D., Md.). If successful, Brock would be first man popularly elected to U.S. Senate from two states. . . . Good news, bad news for Virginia Sen. **Chuck Robb**. Good news is that retired Gov. **Doug Wilder** won't challenge him; bad news is that likely GOP challenger, **Ollie North**, is running strong in polls. Some rumblings among Virginia conservatives against incumbent GOP Sen. **John Warner**. There's talk of pitting former Reagan OMB Director **Jim Miller** against him in 1996, if North beats out Miller for this year's nomination. . . . Boston U. President **John Silber**, who lost to **William Weld** in 1990, plans another run at Massachusetts statehouse, this time as independent. . . . *Logorrhea Redivivus*: Brouhaha over flamboyant windup of **Whitman** gubernatorial race in New Jersey has led **Ed Rollins** back to Catholic Church. But Rollins confesses to **Peggy Noonan** in *Vanity Fair*: "The hardest f---ing part about this Catholic thing is I'm gonna have to forgive [longtime Republican rival] **Roger Stone**." . . . Among Hollywood elite, political donations ran 10 to 1 in favor of Democrats last year, say strategists **Bradley O'Leary** and **Victor Kamber**. Major GOP contributors: **Pat Boone**, **Charlton Heston**, **Bob Hope**, **Chuck Norris**.



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■ Russia's most prominent economic reformer, **Yegor Gaidar**, resigned less than 24 hours after **Bill Clinton** left country. Gaidar's explanation: "I cannot work . . . where decisions I have taken are not approved and at the same time decisions I regard as dangerous are embraced," which could have a lot more to do with internal pressure than with Clinton visit. . . . Visit got modulated approval from **Yuri Chernichenko**, senior deputy in pro-**Yeltsin** upper chamber: "It was a visit of a very good and energetic world leader who wants to achieve great effects practically for free." . . . Not pleased: **Mikhail Gorbachev**, "The U.S. is still undecided what role it may play in the new Europe, but in the meantime it is laying its hands on anything that looks available. Such behavior aimed at a unipolar world can only sow irritation in Russia." . . . In Belarus, President got on side of former Communists and against democrats by playing down visit to burial place of **Stalin**'s victims. . . . Look for big struggle among U.S. Democrats in run-up to renewal of Most Favored Nation status for China in May. . . . **Paul Theroux** quotes British factory manager in a joint venture in China who says conditions in factories are so bad "they would have made **Charles Dickens** throw up." . . . Treasury Secretary **Lloyd Bentsen** says recent State Department report finding that "much much more needs to be done" in China on human-rights front "is a source of anxiety for us." . . . **Rupert Murdoch**, famous for bucking the tide, is establishing residence in Hong Kong (as thousands of middle-class residents flee), in hopes of salvaging his Asian Star satellite TV operation when Red China takes over in 1997.

■ *NR* will take **Dan Quayle**'s "potatoe" against **Al Gore**'s "*E pluribus unum*" any day. The Veep told a Wisconsin audience that *E pluribus unum* means, "Out of one, many." Anyone out there hear the liberals hooting Gore? Anyone expect to?

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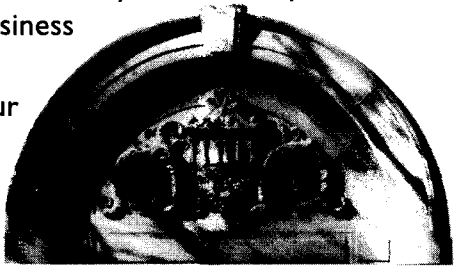

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THE WEEK

■ We can see why Bobby Ray Inman is so upset. It's an outrage that the Republicans were planning to disrupt his daughter's wedding.

■ Morton Halperin has also withdrawn from his nomination, in his case for the post of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Democracy and Peacekeeping. This was a wise decision that will spare him unpleasant and, we had hoped, unsuccessful confirmation hearings. An examination of Mr. Halperin's writings about security policy would have been educational, and we were hoping to learn a bit more about his support for Phillip Agee when the latter was going around revealing the names of U.S. intelligence agents. Still, had Mr. Halperin lost in the Senate, most of the press would have blamed his defeat not on his unfitness for the job but on "right-wing hit squads" and "Cold Warriors." Halperin's Last Stand would have rallied Senate Democrats, however reluctantly, to his defense. Better that he quietly return to private life, and much better that the job (a Clinton invention that ought not to exist anyway) be filled by someone else. Best of all would be if Mr. Clinton henceforth remembers that some elements of his party hold views too extreme to permit their inclusion in any Administration—even his.

■ Some more good news. Both New York's new mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, and New Jersey's new governor, Christine Whitman, are off to stronger starts than many expected. David Dinkins is no longer mayor in large part because of the perception that he was unwilling to confront black crime, as in the months-long illegal boycott of two Korean-owned grocery stores and in his lackluster performance during the Crown Heights riots. Mayor Giuliani has sent a different message by the way he dealt with two recent incidents. Answering a phony 911 call, police entered a Harlem mosque, whereupon a melee erupted. Several police were injured. In Brooklyn, police shot a young black in a murky situation, believing him to be armed. Mr. Giuliani expressed his support for the police, as did his new police commissioner, William Bratton. Furthermore, Mr. Bratton canceled a meeting with black leaders about these incidents when the Reverend Al Sharpton and C. Vernon Mason tried to intrude. Mr. Bratton held a confidential meeting the next day, minus the two demagogues. Across the river, Governor Whitman has firmly reiterated her pledge to lower taxes. There is every reason to believe her—not the least the fact that Marley's ghost, in the form of George Bush, provides a powerful negative example.

■ DAMAGE REPORT: President Clinton took two hits in the last two months, involving sheets and balance sheets. How was his standing affected? If a political wife looks a camera in the eye and says she is not bothered by what her husband may have done, most Americans figure they are not bothered either. So the Clintons, who have stuck together like the burglars in *Home Alone*, emerge from the sex scandal, net, unscathed. Except in the eyes of one important, and little noted, group: white Evangelicals. This was the only voting bloc that stayed with George Bush in 1992, and Bill Clinton, eager to shatter that steadfastness, had launched a major push to court them, climaxing with a values-driven speech to the black Church of God in Christ in Memphis. It got good reviews at the time; post–David Brock, his next dramatic performance had better be as the Prodigal Son.

■ *Q:* What do the Menendez brothers and Lorena Bobbitt have in common? *A:* None of them could find the front door. An illicit union of pop psychology and lawyerly brazeness has produced what might be called the co-dependency defense: Defendants who have confessed to committing violent actions say they had been so degraded by abusive relationships that they went on automatic pilot. If so, they should

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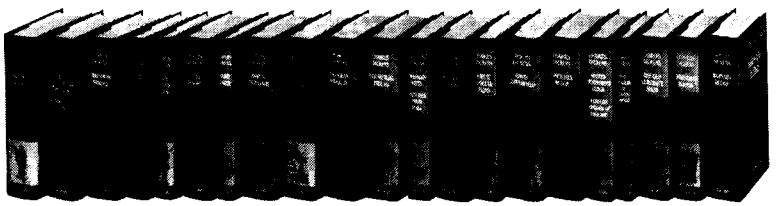

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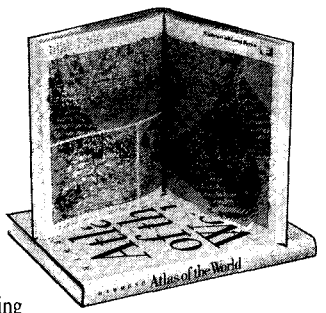

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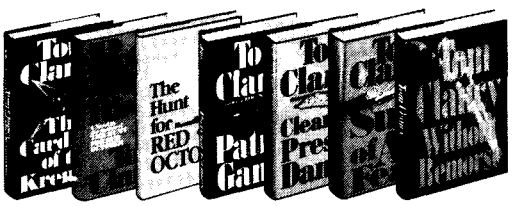

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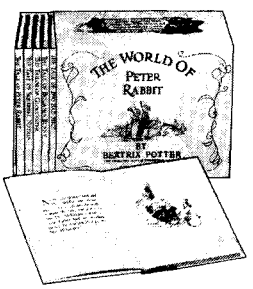

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inspect their wiring in the peace and quiet of a jail cell. The law has always recognized the right of self-defense. But when victims are not in present danger, they always have the option of taking themselves out of harm's way. If, instead, they attack their (alleged) tormentors, they are pursuing vendetta—an ancient system of justice, but one which happens not to be ours.

■ As if American men didn't already face enough sublimated stress from the image of Lorena Bobbitt's 9-inch red-handled kitchen knife, there comes this threat from the National Feminist Association of Ecuador: If she is found guilty of dismembering her husband, the organization will pull a Bobbitt on one hundred American men as revenge. Normally we don't credit threats from bands of terroristic feminists, but in this particular battle of the sexes discretion may be the better part of valor.

■ "We are analyzed out. It's now time to act," Jesse Jackson remarked after a three-day conference of black leaders concerning the violence gripping their community. What he meant, of course, was that it was time for *government* to act, a sentiment heartily approved of by his co-conferees. Ignored by the press was the release the same week of *Black America 1994: Changing Direction*, a report by a group of young black conservatives. Far from encouraging further statist mischief, the authors demonstrate that it is governmental interference, good intentions notwithstanding, that forms the greatest obstacle to black economic and social advancement. Peter Kirasow, among others, lays into the do-good legislative agenda for 1994, taking particular note of how health reform, the proposed tax to pay for job training, and an increased minimum wage would injure those the Clinton Administration intends to benefit. Not that the liberal black leadership will stop calling for government action. Apparently, truly rigorous analysis on their part will have to wait.

■ On January 10, as Russia's new parliament prepared to convene for its first session, Boris Yeltsin issued a formal condemnation of an early crime of the Communist era, the Red Army's murderous suppression in 1921 of a pro-democratic uprising at the naval base of Kronstadt. Why bring up this ancient history now? Because Mr. Yeltsin thinks Russia's diehard Communists need "to look at the bloody trail you have left and to draw a lesson." The lesson: The roots of Soviet terror trace back to the original author of the Soviet state, Lenin himself. This argument is sure to outrage Lenin's apologists in the West. But then, they have been ignoring Kronstadt since long before 1952, when Whittaker Chambers's memoir, *Witness*, was published. It includes an account of the author's first encounter, in 1939, with the Soviet defector Walter Krivitsky. Chambers had only recently quit the Communist underground, and Krivitsky tested him with a question: Is the Soviet government fascist? Yes, Chambers replied. "You are right," Krivitsky said, "and Kronstadt was the turning point." Chambers adds: "I knew what Krivitsky meant. But who else for a thousand miles around could know what we were talking about?" Certainly not Chambers's many detractors, who are persuaded to this day that his anti-Communism was a form of dementia. Now it is shared, it seems, by the first freely elected leader in Russian history.

■ While the world looks on, violence and atrocities are committed, and neither the United Nations nor NATO seems inclined to do anything about it. But enough about the U.S. Olympic figure-skating team.

■ Mr. Barry Manilow, reportedly a singer, canceled an inaugural-gala engagement in Atlantic City, only hours in advance, upon learning that he had been "positioned" thereby into the appearance of endorsing Governor-elect Christine Whitman. Mr. Manilow has been spared this embarrassment, and Whitman well-wishers have been spared listening to Mr. Manilow, so life is good in New Jersey.

■ The Kentucky Educational Reform Act is the latest incarnation of that seriously flawed approach to learning called "outcomes-based education," an approach which is hostile to educational *results*. The Kentucky Educational Association, following the spirit of the Act, has decided to withdraw sponsorship of its state's participation in the national spelling bee on the grounds that such competition causes children stress by forcing rote memorization and endangers the self-esteem of the losers. The further reasoning seems to be that students don't need ac-

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Hillary Can't Wait

I've observed disinterments that cut
Quite a swath through the media, but
    What Whitewater reveals
    Could top Movietone reels
Of Lord Carnarvon digging up Tut.

W. H. VON DREELE

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tual writing skills, realized in careful composition and spelling, so much as an overall ability to "express themselves." The Act seeks to encourage a "total learning experience," ignoring the fact that the ability not only to use a word correctly but also to spell it is part of the totality of learning that word. And such ability, far from oppressing, liberates us to use it with precision and flair. "Outcomes-based education" understands none of this—but many parents do. Resistance is gathering.

■ The TV event of the fortnight was the mini-series *Tales of the City*. Based on Armistead Maupin's soap-operatic novel about life in San Francisco during the 1970s, *Tales* was notable on three counts: for the amount of nudity it featured, which was unprecedented for non-cable TV; for the, um, diversity of sexual relationships among its protagonists, including many homosexuals, several adulterers, a transsexual, a pederast, and a child porn star, but not even one pair of monogamous heterosexuals; and for the fact that the whole shebang comes to us courtesy of the U.S. Government and its Public Broadcasting System.

■ THE WAY WE LIVE NOW: Ewart Yearwood, a freshman at Swarthmore, was accused last fall of "intimidating" Alexis Clinansmith, another freshman, by repeatedly importuning her for dates, once entering her dormitory room without invitation, and generally making a nuisance of himself. The college administration responded by ordering him to keep a forty-foot distance from her at all times. Later charging him with violating this policy of "active avoidance," it suspended him for the spring semester, agreeing to pay $10,000 for his room, board, books, and tuition at Columbia with the intention of allowing his return in the fall, provided he accepted counseling. The resulting furor has not been convenient for Swarthmore president Alfred H. Bloom, who took office promising a more tolerant atmosphere for students from diverse ethnic groups; Mr. Yearwood is Hispanic and blames "socio-economic differences" for what he considers Miss Clinansmith's over-reaction. "I am an urban Hispanic male," he says, "who went to public school in Harlem [he also went to a private prep school on scholarship]. . . . She went to an all-girl private school and comes from an affluent background"—a difference that might have alerted him to the need for discretion in his approaches. The matter is further complicated by two incidents of similar behavior in high school. Mr. Bloom wants Mr. Yearwood "to learn to better manage" his relations with other students while away. But Columbia has rejected his application, citing substandard grades. Lawyers marshaled, the battle has been joined. The case has had a predictably divisive effect, as those in Mr. Yearwood's camp claim hounding by the forces of political correctness, while others see a clear example of sexual harassment. Seldom mentioned in the press is civility, against which Mr. Yearwood has clearly offended, and which colleges clearly have a duty to uphold.

■ Betsey Wright, Washington lobbyist, former controller of what she called "bimbo eruptions," and longtime associate of President Clinton, announces that the FBI wants to talk to her about the Whitewash, uh, Whitewater thing, and that she's not surprised. She is reported to have moved several boxes of files from her office to her home for "sorting" in anticipation of the subpoena. Sorting files seems to be a fad these days.

Partners for Peace

Are they in the servants' hall
  Or a vestibule?
There's no blackboard on the wall,
  So it's not a school.
Maybe they've been asked to wait
  In the building's lift.
Vaclav says he feels like freight.
  Lech says they've been stiffed.

W. H. VON DREELE

Chalk Talk

THE TROOPERS' revelations and Whitewatergate have bruised President Clinton—and will probably continue to do so—but Republicans can't let the scandals distract them from their central task. President Clinton, talking New Democrat and governing Old, represents an enormous political danger that can be averted—as a number of the articles in this issue testify—*only* by a consistent differentiation of his policy positions from those of the Republican Party.

The mission statement of Bill Kristol's Project for the Republican Future lays it on the line: "The Republican Party needs a governing vision and a concrete agenda. For while the Clinton Administration staggers forward under the weight of an exhausted and discredited liberalism, it is *Republicans* who have an historic opportunity to shape the nation's future." A poll conducted for NATIONAL REVIEW by Fabrizio, McLaughlin & Associates shows just how vulnerable President Clinton is to such an issues-oriented counterpunch.

About 51 per cent of respondents said they had a favorable opinion of Mr. Clinton, with only 32 per

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cent saying they had an unfavorable one. But when they were asked to grade the President—from "A" to "F"—on his performance in specific areas, Mr. Clinton's tepid support gets an Arctic blast. His average "grade" was a "C–" for seven of nine issues and a "C" for the other two; 69 per cent of respondents gave him a "C" or below on reducing wasteful spending, 62 per cent on getting the economy moving again, 63 per cent for handling the crisis in the former Yugoslavia.

Why the approval of Mr. Clinton in general and disapproval of specific performances? Part of the explanation is a media culture that, if left unchallenged, tends to soften the images of liberals. Case in point: Jimmy Carter. Asked whom they admired more as President, 48 per cent of respondents said Ronald Reagan, with Mr. Carter checking in at a respectable 41 per cent. But on the question, Who better handled foreign affairs? Mr. Reagan bested Mr. Carter 62 to 29, and on creating economic growth, 65

RIGHT DATA

Stock Market High

WALL STREET is getting nervous. Since the end of the Persian Gulf War the stock market has moved up more than 1,200 points, a gain of nearly 50 per cent as measured by the Dow Jones Industrial Average. However, much of this gain is owing to the lowest interest rates in twenty years, which forced many conservative investors into equities. This trend will soon run its course, while economic fundamentals such as corporate profits certainly do not justify the current level of stock prices. Many financial gurus predict a 10 to 20 per cent stock-market "correction" in the next year.

Investors might find a longer view comforting—or maybe not.

CAPITAL GAINS: REAL OR PHANTOM?

	Dow Jones Close		Top Capital Gains Tax Rate		
	Current Dollars	1993 Dollars	Nominal	Real*	Inflation Rate
1965	969.3	4,446.5	25.0%	38.3%	1.6%
1970	838.9	3,124.3	32.3	93.7	5.7
1975	852.4	2,289.4	45.5	183.5	9.1
1980	964.0	1,690.5	28.0	154.0	13.5
1985	1,546.7	2,077.1	20.0	44.0	3.6
1990	2,633.7	2,911.8	28.0	78.4	5.4
1991	3,168.8	3,361.9	28.0	67.2	4.2
1992	3,301.1	3,399.8	28.0	56.0	3.0
1993	3,754.1	3,754.1	28.0	53.2	2.7

*Assumes 3.0% real capital gain realized after a year.

When adjusted for inflation, current stock prices are not high at all. On the last day of 1993, for example, the DJIA closed at 3,754.1. Twenty-eight years earlier it closed at 969.3—a level equivalent to 4,446.5 in 1993 dollars. Federal tax policy explains much of the stock market's dismal long-term performance. An investor who bought $969 of Dow stocks in 1965 and sold them for $3,754 at the end of last year has a nominal gain of $2,785. Under current law he faces a capital-gains tax liability of $780 (28 per cent of the nominal gain), although he actually suffered a capital loss of nearly $700 after adjusting for inflation.

Long-term investors are not the only ones hurt by the failure to index. As shown by the chart, a person selling after only one year has historically faced real tax rates of more than 100 per cent. Lower inflation and the Reagan tax cut effectively lowered such tax rates in the early 1980s, setting off a sharp upturn in real stock prices. Nevertheless, a typical investor still faces tax rates of more than 50 per cent on real capital gains.

Rational people will hold on to appreciated stock rather than let Uncle Sam take more than half of their real gains. David Goldman of Bear Stearns estimates that approximately $4 trillion of the nation's $17-trillion total net worth is "locked in," or kept off the market, because of tax considerations. The economy suffers when taxpayers behave like that.

How to unlock the gains? Outgoing Federal Reserve Governor Wayne Angell recently proposed indexing all capital gains to inflation. To ensure that all real gains are eventually taxed, he would eliminate the provision in the current law allowing a step-up in the basis of assets at death. Even prospective indexation, limited to assets purchased after the law is passed, would produce a boom: the DJIA would increase by 15 per cent, while the smaller, newer stocks listed in NASDAQ would rise 25 per cent, according to Polyconomics.

Treasury estimates that this unlocking effect would recoup all the static revenue loss from indexation. The CBO and Joint Economic Committee project a revenue loss. History supports Treasury.

Last August Mr. Clinton delivered a Democratic capital-gains cut: He raised rates on ordinary income, leaving the capital-gains tax rate unchanged. That's not what we had in mind.

—ED RUBENSTEIN

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to 25. Carter the image—never mind what the man wrought in office—gets subtle but constant boosts from the media, and so will Clinton.

That's why Republicans must focus on President Clinton's substance, and the economy is one of the prime issues. Just 10 per cent of respondents credit Clinton policies alone for the economy's new-found momentum; 47 per cent say his chief economic initiative so far—last year's tax hike—will hurt them financially; and a hefty 51 per cent, given five options, chose eliminating wasteful federal spending as most important to economic growth. It follows that spending-cut proposals, like last year's Penny–Kasich, forced Mr. Clinton to reveal himself as not only foursquare against his New Democrat rhetoric but in opposition to what most of the public considers sound fiscal policy.

This is relevant to almost every issue. Mr. Clinton's health-care proposal could add $425 billion to the deficit by the year 2000. His welfare "reform" is shaping up as an expensive jobs program. As he admitted in his defense of entitlement programs at the December deficit-cutting conference in Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky's district, spending—especially on the middle class—is at the heart of his program. "It is the middle-class entitlements," he said, "that have united us and brought us together." But this buy-them-off liberalism is losing its charm. What Republicans must learn is to stop just trying to buy votes more cheaply.

In New Jersey and Virginia Republican candidates took governorships by attacking the liberal philosophy at its root, appealing to electorates that increasingly say they want fewer taxes *and* fewer services. Combine fiscal stinginess with positions further to the right than Mr. Clinton can plausibly go on gut issues like crime (adopting "three strikes and you're out," among other policies), immigration (limiting legal entrants and expelling illegal ones), and affirmative action (ending it now, in all its incarnations), and the President begins to look more like an echo than a choice.

Most Americans will swallow Bill Clinton, warts and all, as long as they think his policies benefit the nation; that they don't is Mr. Clinton's greatest weakness, and proving it the Republicans' greatest challenge. Time to start meeting it.

The Clinton Trip

BEFORE Mr. Clinton left for Europe, an unkind press predicted disarray. "U.S. Is Scrambling for a Strategy on Eve of Clinton European Trip," reported the *New York Times*. In the event, the trip presented a strategy, Russocentrism, and a strategist, Strobe Talbott. Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary were not allowed to join NATO because Russia is strongly opposed to their doing so. When we finally paid attention to Ukraine, it was to celebrate that country's agreement to turn its nuclear warheads over to Russia. This is Mr. Talbott's handiwork.

Perhaps the decision on NATO could be defended on prudential grounds, but those were not the grounds on which it was made. As Henry Kissinger commented about the Russian objections, "We resisted the blackmail when Russia was strong; does it make sense to permit Moscow to blackmail us now with its domestic weakness?"

Mr. Talbott thinks he is helping Boris Yeltsin, but he is not. Empire and Democracy in Russia are incompatible: a Russia using force to rule its neighbors is not going to become a liberal society. Nor will it have an accommodating policy toward the West. In a contest over Russian foreign policy between reformers and Zhirinovsky types, the latter's brand of super-patriotism may well win out. We should be restraining Russian imperial urges, not placing this burden entirely upon Yeltsin and Russia's embattled reformers.

This lesson is well understood in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and Eduard Shevardnadze told some recent American visitors to Georgia that NATO should expand eastward now, when that is comparatively easier to do than it will be in a few years. Recent German visitors to Washington, including Karsten Voigt of the Bundestag, have made the same point. Voigt also urged us to avoid allowing an unstable region to develop between Germany and Russia over which those two countries would squabble—or perhaps worse, collaborate.

Mr. Clinton claims that the road to NATO membership for East Europeans is now clearly open. The way to test his bona fides is clear: The Partnership for Peace calls for joint military exercises between NATO and the East Europeans; such exercises in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic would be a signal to them (and to Russia as well) that Western concerns about their security are genuine and that "partnership for peace" will not be an empty phrase. Let the exercises begin soon, be sizable, and be repeated regularly.

The Two Mexicos

THE REBELLION in Chiapas is the most violent incident in Mexico in 25 years, and has raised questions about that country's stability. But Mexico is engaged in a great economic and social transformation that is inherently destabilizing, and moments of unrest and violence are inevitable. The Mexican government ought to be con-

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demned only if it baly mishandles the uprising. Thus far, President Salinas has applied his characteristic tough and sensible approach, sending in the army but offering negotiations as well.

Two things are striking about Chiapas. First, the guerrillas' degree of organization and their armaments and communications equipment raise questions about their backing. This was no spontaneous peasant uprising. Did they have help from disgruntled elements of the army (or of the governing PRI) that oppose Salinas's modernization strategy? Was there assistance from Guatemalan or other Central American guerrillas, or from Cuba? These questions are worth pursuing.

Second, this kind of problem in Mexico's south will not soon go away. Italy provides a useful compari-

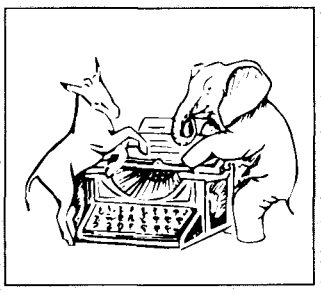
POLITICAL NOTEBOOK

■ **Massachusetts:** Senator Ted Kennedy needs no introduction. His liberal record and equally liberal lifestyle have been thoroughly studied by ogling media and giggling Republicans. Because of the family mystique, he has never seriously been challenged (strongest to date: George Cabot Lodge, 41 per cent in 1962, Kennedy's first Senate race). But the Kennedy mystique has been tarnished and the senator's approval ratings are sinking; Republicans say this is the year to retire him.

Early hopes were dashed when Bill Weld decided to seek a second term as governor. Then the conservative and popular state treasurer, Joe Malone, opted out. Andy Card, who worked for Reagan and Bush, flirted for months, then declined.

State conservatives are divided among the remaining candidates. One faction likes Gary Todd—who is the most socially conservative, but has had trouble raising money and expanding his base. Other GOP conservatives are talking about John Lakian. However, he lost a gubernatorial run in 1982 because of revelations that he made up bits of his résumé, and that information of course leads most news stories about him. Still others are betting on Janet Jeghelian, a popular talk-show host who has recently been sounding quite conservative (though her reputation is as a moderate); she was touted as an early favorite because Phil Gramm and his National Republican Senatorial Committee thought a woman would have the best chance of beating the womanizing senator.

Now emerging from the field, however, is Mitt Romney, a successful Boston venture capitalist and son to the former governor of Michigan. Ray Shamie—whose 1982 challenge of Kennedy fell apart in the closing weeks, but who remains the most respected conservative in the state—is behind him. Romney has lacks political experience of his own, though he has worked on campaigns of his father and his mother. But against an opponent with *only* political experience, this young, likable man could be the knight in shining armor that 60 per cent of state voters hypothetically speak of when they tell pollsters that Senator Kennedy should not be reelected. If Romney can remember to go after his own constituency—people tired of high taxes and social liberalism—and not try to appeal to Kennedy's core support, he could be a formidable opponent.



■ **Minnesota:** Veteran Republican Senator Dave Durenberger's troubles should have been a boon for the Democratic Farmer–Labor Party. He has been weakened by scandal for two years, which gave the DFL two years to prepare for either a vulnerable opponent or an open seat if he pulled out (as he now has). But when the DFL's Paul Wellstone was elected to the other seat in 1990, the party was so confident it could win this year that it decreed its next, successful candidate would be a woman. But it made that confining pronouncement before making sure it had a convincing female candidate. So now—party heavyweight Skip Humphrey having bowed out—it is left with several second-tier women, and one unknown man.

On the Independent Republican side, conservatives have four candidates to choose among. Doug McFarland, a law professor, was the first to enter the race and has made early inroads. However, he had previously been only mildly active in party politics, and has no political experience to speak of. Bert McKasy is a successful St. Paul businessman whose ties to wealthy Twin Cities corporations and individuals can help him with the ever-needed money. Gen Olson, a farmer and conservative state senator, has an extensive career in local politics, but is not well known statewide. That leaves Rod Grams, currently serving his first term in the U.S. House.

Grams made a name by vowing with other freshmen to cleanup a decadent Congress. In response to the Clinton budget last year, he proposed a spending- and tax-cut plan that became the Republican party line. He has voted against abortion funding, the Brady bill, national service, extension of unemployment, and family leave.

One can speculate from their campaign talk that his three opponents would have voted as he did, and would do so in the Senate. But Rod Grams has *proved* how he would vote. In addition, he has proved that he can raise money and run an effective campaign.

Conservative delegates at the IR convention this spring should endorse Mr. Grams (the final decision is made by primary voters, who tend to follow the convention's decree) and corral his rivals into his camp. Particularly because Lieutenant Governor Joanell Dyrstad, from the party's liberal wing, is thought likely to enter the primary, regardless of a convention endorsement. A tough show of party solidarity could dissuade. —Geoffrey Morris

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son: there the economic and social gap between the north and the south remains enormous even after decades of efforts to eliminate it. Ten years from now northern Mexico, with modern cities like Monterrey, will increasingly resemble Texas, while Chiapas will remain more like Guatemala. Mexico has made enormous progress toward economic and social modernization under President Salinas. The rebellion is a reminder that a very long road lies ahead.

Quotas in School Discipline

MR. ALBERT SHANKER, president of the American Federation of Teachers, publishes a useful weekly column in the Sunday *New York Times*. It appears as a paid ad, and so does not get the readership it deserves; yet it is much better journalism than is produced by several of the *Times*'s regular staff columnists.

Mr. Shanker, perhaps inevitably, is a fierce defender of the public schools, and on this account rejects all proposals for school choice that would include private schools. On this he emphatically parts company with us. But on his own terms he is tough-minded, realistic, and honest. And he is horrified by what is going on in the public-school system in Cincinnati.

Common sense indicates that disorder, disruption, and violence render classroom instruction difficult if not impossible. Accordingly, the Cincinnati school district a couple of years ago instituted a tough disciplinary code. Students who disrupt classes or endanger other people receive stiff penalties. Cursing at a teacher pulls mandatory suspension. Chronic offenders can be suspended for up to eighty days.

Without discipline such as this, it is impossible to talk about improving U.S. educational performance. Yet Mr. Shanker informs us that Cincinnati's effective code is now in trouble. The gravamen of the charge is that the code has a disparate impact: more black than white students are penalized. A court settlement proposed recently seeks to redress this situation. It would require that records be kept of the race and gender of the teacher referring a student for disciplinary action, and also the race and gender of the student. These records will be used in teacher evaluation, including matters like raises, further training, and termination. What they amount to, at least inferentially, is a system of racial quotas in school disciplinary cases.

Mr. Shanker very rightly asks: "What standards will be used in interpreting the records? Will it be okay for a black teacher to refer a black child for disciplinary action but not for a white teacher—even if it's the same offense? Will a white female teacher who mainly refers African-American boys be in trouble, while a black male teacher doing the same will be all right? Will kids of different races who break the same rules be dealt with differently? Might a quota system be set up that establishes how many kids in different race groups can be disciplined for a given offense in the same year?" The quota system Mr. Shanker envisions here would, if implemented, put at risk the education of every student in the Cincinnati school system—threatening the very concept of public schooling that he seeks to preserve. An excellent and chilling report from yet another sector of the battlefront.

Who'll Die for Bratislava?

Not I, said the cock;
  Don't ask, said the hen;
The horses, *en bloc*,
  Neighed, "Never again!"
The duck, with flat feet,
  Is negative, too;
The sow is in heat;
  So how about you?

W. H. VON DREELE

Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., R I P

MANY OF the obituaries for "Tip" O'Neill, the Speaker of the House through three-quarters of the Reagan Administration, quoted his comment expressing astonishment at Ronald Reagan's "ignorance" about government. His shock was appropriate, for O'Neill was well versed in the ways of modern government.

Tip O'Neill's bluff, genial persona, and his unashamedly portly appearance recalled the textures of the bygone urban machines under which he grew up. The machines had their vices, which the names Jimmy Walker and James Michael Curley evoke. But they administered concrete benefits to local neighborhoods. O'Neill, who was first elected to office when he was a college student, graduated from *The Last Hurrah* to liberalism. All the Balkanizing interest groups of the day replaced friends and neighbors as constituents, and the national economy replaced City Hall as trough. O'Neill duly embraced the fashionable anti-anti-Communism of Massachusetts Democrats (Harvard was in his district). He assailed Ronald Reagan, who had grown up in a poorer family than his, as a tool of the rich. He showered the Democratic majority in the House—a corrupt cadre that eventually replaced him with Jim Wright—with junkets and perks. Under his steward-

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ship, the federal budget was, like him, unsightly and uncontrolled.

Bill Clinton, the liberal as baby-boomer, has learned a new line of talk and lost (some) weight. The policies, however, are continuous.

NOTES & ASIDES

■ Dear Bill:

I just got my Christmas present from Hertz. It's the story of the company—beautifully printed and truly worthwhile. It's the book I always hoped that somebody would write.

I don't know if you are on their list or not, but if you would like to borrow my copy you are in for a great treat. Hertz is not a company—it's a family, it's a religion, it's a way of life.

I assume that you are going to reprint this letter as you have all my past correspondence. If you do, would you mention my new book, *Leaving Home*, published by Putnam's? It's the story of a poor boy who could never afford a Hertz credit card.

Cheers,
Art [Buchwald]
Washington, D.C.

Dear Art: I am very jealous. I won't read their book. I'll just stick with yours. Why *did* you leave home?
Cordially,
Bill

■ Mr. Eric Alterman
Stanford, Calif.

Dear Eric:

You will perhaps have noticed the excision of your name from the paperback of the anti-Semitism book, as requested.

Now: Just yesterday I had reason to pick up your book looking for something on behalf of a friend. I sighed but accepted as inevitable the populist blather (p. 123) about my superordinate concern for skiers in Gstaad and yachtsmen in the Caribbean—okay, that's the kind of thing people qualified to be managing editor of *The Nation* need to say.

But then you referred to me as a "self-styled aristocrat." I would be grateful if you would explain to me how you came upon that designation. I have never referred to myself as an "aristocrat," which, incidentally, aristocrats would never do. Ah! Maybe that's it! *Because I have never called myself an aristocrat, I therefore take on that mannerism of an aristocrat*—becoming one, to be sure, self-styled. On the other hand, you mention my grandfather. I frequently refer to my grandfather, the sheriff of Duvall County in Texas. I say about him that he was

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renowned for his loyalty to the Democratic Party and for his emphasis on law and order, but that his loyalty to the former exceeded his loyalty to the latter, inasmuch as though he died in 1904, he voted for Lyndon Johnson in 1948.

But anyway, I'd be grateful to hear from you on this point. And you must tell me how I can spot "self-styled" aristocrats all by myself. Share your secrets! Be a redistributionist *à outrance*!

With cordial regards,
/s/ Bill
Wm. F. Buckley Jr.

"I don't care who *gets federal funds. I own a company that makes pork-barrels."*

Dear Mr. Buckley:

Thanks very much for your thoughtful note of December 8. I did not receive it until Christmas Eve, but sat down to answer immediately, even though I imagine you are probably in Gstaad or better yet, some Caribbean island of which I have not even heard.

I am sincerely sorry to hear that my name has been excised from the paperback of the anti-Semitism book. I rather appreciated your making such extensive use of my arguments re Brother Buchanan, as I believe I said in the opening sentences of my original ill-fated note. I was hoping that the guilt that you truly deserved to experience as a result of the carelessness involved in your errors would at a minimum garner me an invitation on *Firing Line* one evening when my friend Mark Green was busy running for some office somewhere. Alas, it was not to be.

When I was a freshman in college, in 1978, I attended a speech you gave at Bailey Hall on the campus of Cornell University. I recall quite vividly a young man, his voice breaking with emotion, asking you, as he called it, "one simple question: Mr. Buckley," he quivered, "have you ever gone hungry?" Your reply, and I believe I am quoting you accurately though this was nearly 16 years ago, was, "Why, yes, my yacht experienced an unfortunate shortage of stuffed goose recently between Nassau and the Bahamas."

At the time, I remember thinking, "Well, hey," or some such adolescent expression, "this Buckley fellow is playing by different rules than the rest of us." Mr. Buckley, forgive my saying so, but in a nation that has no historic tradition of an aristocratic class, you are clearly an aristocrat. The fact that you never refer to yourself as one is, as you guessed, further proof of your appropriated station. I grew up in Scarsdale, New York. And I can tell you from experience that the vulgar rich among my friends' parents and my parents' friends did not refer to themselves as "the vulgar rich." This hardly made them any less so.

You might have argued—I think it would have been more profitable, actually—that in a nation such as ours, all but invented by a bastard from the West Indies, aristocrats are by definition "self-styled." The modifier in your case was therefore redundant, and hence, also gratuitous. I would grant that point, but surely a victory so slight is beneath the quality of those to which you have become accustomed. I mean, after electing a malleable dolt like Ronald Reagan to the highest office in the land, getting a punk like me to withdraw an adjective must seem an awful anticlimax.

As for how can you, too, recognize aristocrats on the street, this, I fear, is a talent that has either been born to one or has not. Your grandfather, however, seems to me to be quite safe. No aristocrat of any style would have voted for Lyndon Johnson. And on this matter, I must say, I agree with you aristocrats.

With warm regards,
Eric Alterman
Washington, D.C.

Dear Eric:

Nice try. But then your problems are, of course, insuperable. To begin with, your memory is defective: I don't even know what stuffed goose tastes like. And the lilt of the sentence you ascribe to me doesn't fit, unless the context in which it was said was comic; but then that in turn does not fit the image of the student-in-tears.

Your modifiers are once again misplaced in referring to the "malleable" Mr. Reagan. You see, it was not he who proved malleable, but the Soviet Union. Mr. Reagan ordered the Berlin Wall to come down, and it did; he ordered Communism to go to the ashheap of history, and it did. We know that my grandfather's vote for LBJ was done on his behalf, but the Democratic grave-robbers were certainly not self-styled.

And on the other business. 1) If your parents' vulgar rich friends did not so designate themselves, then you'd be wrong in referring to them as "self-styled vulgar rich." 2) That which is redundant is not necessarily gratuitous. 3) The victory I have won may be slight in your eyes, but inasmuch as it is the only victory I set out to win, you will acknowledge that your capitulation on this modest point is welcome.

Yours cordially,
Bill
—WFB

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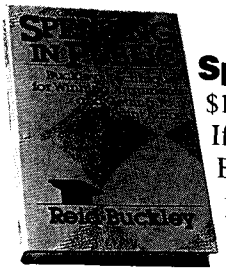
The Right Gifts for the Valentine



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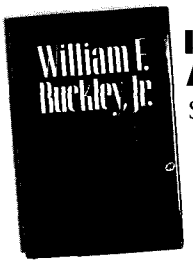

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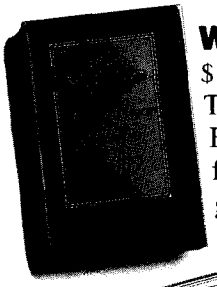

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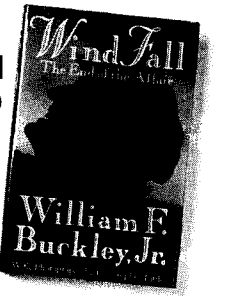

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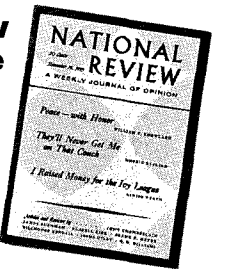

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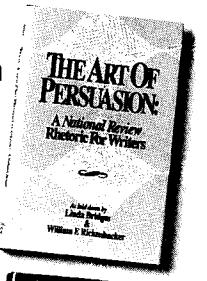

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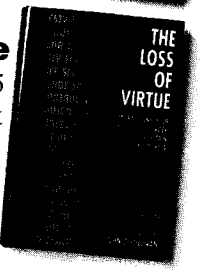

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ON THE SCENE

Off Balance

VIN WEBER

WASHINGTON, D.C.

FOR OVER a decade, Republicans have been working to pass a balanced-budget amendment. Every Republican platform since 1980 has called for such an amendment; for 12 years Presidents Reagan and Bush pushed for it in every State of the Union address; and congressional Republicans have on several occasions gotten it to just a few votes shy of passage. This year, it looks as if Republicans may finally get their wish. A version of the amendment sponsored by Senators Paul Simon (D., Ill.) and Orrin Hatch (R., Utah) is expected to come up for a vote in February, and all signs indicate it has an excellent chance of passing. If it does, it will be a tremendous victory for the GOP—or will it?

The amendment proposed by Senator Simon would require a balanced budget by 1999, and would mandate that all federal outlays could not exceed receipts in any fiscal year. The requirement would be lifted in only two cases: 1) if three-fifths super-majorities in both Houses of Congress voted to allow a deficit; 2) a declaration of war was in effect or if Congress had voted to approve the use of military force in a conflict "which causes an imminent and serious military threat to national security" (such as the war in Iraq).

The Simon amendment currently has 49 co-sponsors, and some dozen other senators have publicly declared their support for it. There are only 20 declared opponents, leaving 20 senators undeclared, of whom the Simon forces need to win over only 7 to get the two-thirds majority needed to pass a constitutional amendment. Simon claims he is 2 votes away. If he succeeds, the bill would then go to the House, where it fell just 9 votes short in 1992. This year's iconoclastic freshman class could provide the missing votes. The amendment would then be sent to the states, where it would require ratification by 38 of the 50 legislatures. Since most states require balanced budgets of themselves, it seems highly unlikely they would vote to exempt Washington from a similar constraint.

Stephen Moros

Mr. Clinton came out against the bill last November, much to the chagrin of many of his top advisors. Senior White House aides report that "almost nobody" among the President's senior staff agreed with his decision to oppose the Simon amendment. As one aide argued, the decision put him "on the wrong side of public opinion, on the wrong side of the spending issue, and on the wrong side of the voters." Indeed, polls show that Americans support the balanced-budget amendment by a margin of 3 to 1.

To support the amendment is unquestionably good politics. It is not so clear, however, whether it is good economics. Senator Simon sees a large role for tax increases in balancing the budget, and his bill is jury-rigged to facilitate new taxes. Previous GOP versions of the amendment included what was called a "taxpayer-protection provision," which would require the same three-fifths super-majority to pass tax increases that would be required to approve deficit spending. But the Simon bill requires only a simple majority to pass new taxes.

Even President Clinton cited the danger that the amendment would create pressure for "massive tax increases." Because the deficit rises automatically when the economy dips, Clinton argued, to comply with the Simon bill, "we [would] have to raise taxes and cut expenditures whenever the economy is weak." While concern over higher taxes may seem a bit disingenuous coming from the President who gave us the largest tax increase in American history, he is essentially correct in this instance. As we painfully learned from the 1990 budget agreement, raising taxes during a recession is disastrous economic policy. Simon's legislation would essentially enshrine the principles of the 1990 budget agreement in the Constitution.

Among other consequences, if in 1999 a Republican President wanted to pursue a capital-gains or income tax cut to stimulate growth, he would, under a balanced-budget amendment, face enormous constitutional obstacles to doing so. Since the budget is based on a static economic model—e.g., since it ignores the dynamic effects of a capital-gains tax cut—it would assume lost revenues. Constitutionally, unless those lost revenues were "paid for" with additional spending cuts (on top of the already deep cuts enacted to comply with the amendment earlier), any tax cut would be barred. Since social spending predominantly goes to the poor and middle class, and since Democrats have succeeded in dubbing a capital-gains tax cut as a tax cut for the rich, we would have the fairness issue in spades.

In this sense, the balanced-budget amendment presents a much more serious problem for the Republicans than it does for the Democrats. Democrats face no challenge to their economic philosophy from a balanced-budget amendment—they have no

Mr. Weber, a former congressman from Minnesota, is co-director of Empower America.

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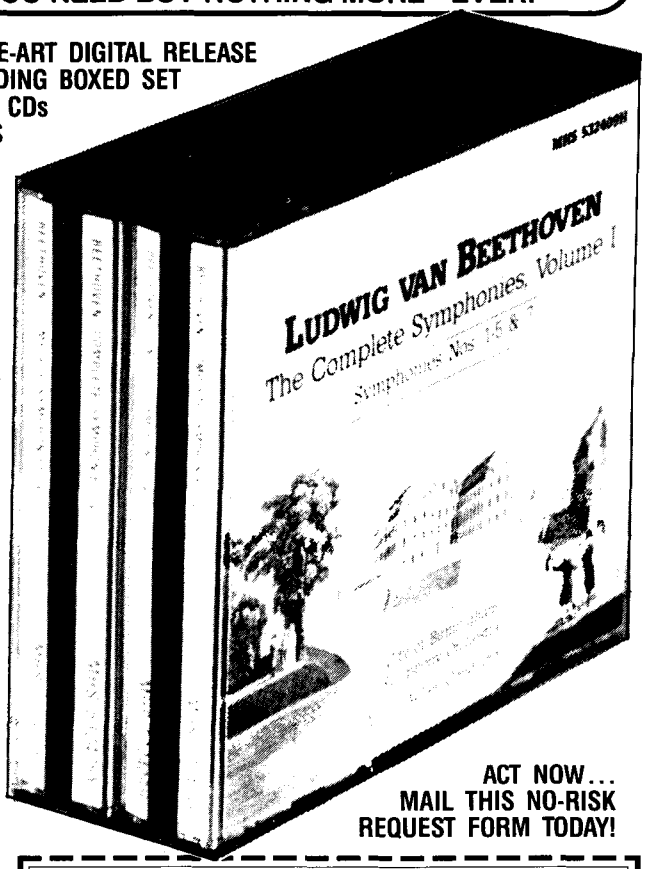

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problem raising taxes to pay for increased spending. Republicans, on the other hand, would be emasculated, left without an active agenda to pursue. In all likelihood, had the balanced-budget amendment been in effect in 1981, the Reagan Revolution would have never occurred. Under the strictures of the Simon bill, Congress would never have passed the 25 per cent income-tax rate cut that President Reagan championed in 1981—the very policy which unleashed the economic boom of the 1980s. The balanced-budget amendment Republicans advocate today could end up undermining their efforts to unleash growth-oriented policies tomorrow.

The amendment has become almost a litmus-test issue within the GOP, and so far no major Republican leader in Congress has come out publicly against it. However, some of the party's intellectual leaders are beginning to argue for a different approach. Lawrence Kudlow, chief economist at Bear Stearns and economic guru to many congressional Republicans, advocates an alternative package of reforms that would reverse some of the provisions of the disastrous 1974 Congressional Budget Act, which dramatically weakened the President's power to slow or cut government spending. Such reforms include restoring presidential impoundment authority, abolishing the current-services baseline (which automatically increases funds to maintain government programs at existing levels in the coming year), establishing limits on spending as a share of GNP, and giving the President the line-item veto (an idea which Clinton has supported in the past). These kinds of reforms would make Congress justify every new dollar spent, give the President some real power to stop runaway congressional spending, and create a climate for real deficit reduction.

If President Clinton wants to persuade members of Congress to oppose the amendment, he will have to put forward a package of serious alternatives for cutting the deficit. You can't beat something with nothing. If Clinton does not come up with a bold alternative such as the Kudlow plan, he will all but concede the battle to Senator Simon. After pressuring Congress to walk the plank on his tax bill earlier this year, and then pressuring it again to vote against the $90-billion Penny–Kasich deficit-reduction plan, President Clinton will have a hard time convincing it to vote against another highly popular deficit-reduction plan.

For the GOP, the debate exposes a larger problem: the lack of any coherent economic vision. Deficit reduction, while important, is not an economic philosophy. But so far it has dominated the Republican economic agenda in Congress.

For his part, Senator Dan Coats (R., Ind.) has tried to provide an alternative. He recently introduced the FIRST (Family, Investment, Retirement, Savings, and Tax Fairness) bill in the Senate, a plan designed by the Heritage Foundation and sponsored in the House by freshmen Representatives Rod Grams (R., Minn.) and Tim Hutchison (R., Ark.). The FIRST bill would provide American families with a $500-per-child tax credit, cut the capital-gains tax to 15 per cent and index it to inflation, and cut the deficit in half over five years. It is the only major legislation proposed since President Clinton came to office which directly challenges the basic tenets of Clintonomics. Sadly, it has failed to excite Republicans the way the balanced-budget amendment and other deficit-reduction bills have. The Coats plan deserves a second look.

In the House, there are some signs of progress. Representative John Kasich (R., Ohio), ranking Republican on the House Budget Committee and one of the GOP's leading deficit hawks, has begun to come around on the growth issue. Kasich, who co-authored the widely popular Penny–Kasich bill, intends to include growth measures, including a capital-gains tax cut in his Republican alternative budget next year. That will mark an important turning point for the GOP, helping to move the party off the dangerous path of "austerity" economics and back onto the successful road of Reaganomics.

If Republicans want the American people to trust them with leadership again, they need to follow Kasich's lead and unite behind an active agenda that combines serious deficit reduction with a more comprehensive, positive vision for how to create jobs and help the economy grow. If they do, they will not only be issuing a philosophical challenge to President Clinton—they will be laying the ideological groundwork for a return to the unprecedented growth we saw in the 1980s. □

The Milosevic Mafia

CHANDLER ROSENBERGER

BELGRADE

THOSE haggard men muttering, "*Devise, devise*" on every street-corner in downtown Belgrade—are they drug addicts? Are those pushers cruising from bar to bar in their shiny Mitsubishi Pajero jeeps? When a burst of gunfire leaves a sharp suit dead on the pavement of a New Belgrade housing project, is it a dealers' turf war?

No, but you could be forgiven for thinking so. The citizens of Serbia's capital are addicted, but to hard currency ("*devise*"), not crack or heroin. With their Yugoslav dinar wages melting in their pockets by the hour, Belgraders are digging into their hard-currency savings, rushing wild-eyed from money changers to the black market trying to supplement their ten-dollar-a-month wage with something durable, or at least edible.

With contracts worth as little as the dinars that deals are done in, the few businesses that still function enforce their agreements at the point of a Zastava pistol. Serbia's literary legacy of noble warrior-bandits has come to life in a nightmare form.

Others see more contemporary parallels. Alisa Stojanovic, Serbia's hottest new director, decided to put on *Cabaret* without highlighting the similarities between 1930s Berlin and today's Belgrade. "The parallels are so obvious," Stojanovic said, "that there was no reason to exaggerate them." At a high-tech party rally before the latest farcical Serbian election, for example, war-criminal-turned-candidate "Arkan" condemned an international conspiracy to destroy his nation and

Mr. Rosenberger is a fellow of the Institute of Current World Affairs.

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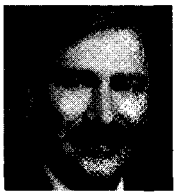

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called for the rebirth of his ancient people.

But while Belgrade's intellectuals went scurrying after historical analogies, pensioners waiting in a breadline saw only the present: "This is happening," one said, "because we didn't have the strength to get rid of Communism." She was right. While smugglers, bandits, and neo-Nazis proliferate in Belgrade, Serbia is being ground into dust by the same grey machine of ex-Communists that launched the Yugoslav war in an attempt to defend its privileges. Small-time criminals, says Duska Jovanic, a stylish journalist specializing in the mafia, are disillusioned by the speed with which the Communists have taken over their trade. "They say, 'When we were robbing banks in the West, we were taking money from Switzerland to Yugoslavia. Now the Communists are taking money from here back to Switzerland.' "

Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic has attempted to blame his country's record-breaking inflation on international sanctions. But as Daniel Cveticanin, an economist at the University of Belgrade, points out, Milosevic's response to sanctions has been far more deadly than the sanctions themselves. By inflating the currency thousands of times faster than wages can possibly rise, Milosevic has essentially imposed a 99.99 per cent income tax on all Serb workers, sucking hard-currency savings out from under mattresses and into his political and war machine.

In 1990 there were billions of dollars in private hands, most earned by the 900,000 Yugoslavs who had worked for 18 years abroad. Those not clever enough to pull their savings out of the banks two years ago lost everything in a government seizure of hard-currency savings. Theoretically this money is still in their accounts. Practically, it is gone.

But how has the government got at money under the mattresses? Through a variety of new schemes. Take, for example, a certain type of bank loan available only to friends of the party. With the right connections, Cveticanin explained, one can give a state bank hard-currency collateral for a loan in Yugoslav dinars that can be paid back in Yugoslav dinars. The recipient of such a loan can turn a quick profit on the street. Say I give Beobanka $5,000 collateral for a loan of 1 billion dinars at 100 per cent monthly interest. I'll have to pay 2 billion dinars back at the end of the month. Fine. I then go to the money-changers who have been selling dinars all day for hard currency and give them a new batch. In the time it has taken me to unload my billion dinars on them, their value has reduced to only $4,000. Am I in trouble?

No. I wait until the end of the month, during which time inflation has run so far ahead of the rate of my loan that I can now get 2 billion dinars for $100. I buy the dinars off the street (perhaps from the employees of someone just starting on such a loan?) and pay off my debt. I'm $3,900 richer. Of course if I want to get such a loan again I'll have to make a donation to a "worthy cause"—say, the Social Party of Serbia or one of the Bosnian Serb irregular forces. But I need not fear that the interest on my loan, no matter how high, will be higher than the rate of inflation.

D. F. Bach

The only loser in this scheme is the poor slob who doesn't have such connections, earns a paltry Yugoslav wage, and is pulling his hard currency out from under the mattress in order to keep up with prices. But since state television has been telling him that inflation is a product of sanctions he's not likely to rebel.

In a normal economy unions would insist that wages be indexed to keep up with inflation. But thanks to Yugoslavia's enduring Communist legacy, union leaders are not elected but appointed by Milosevic's SPS (Socialist Party of Serbia). Instead of pressing for indexing, union leaders "negotiate" with the Economic Chamber of Serbia, representatives of management.

"They make these farcical negotiations every day," says Dusan Mitrovic, head of Serbia's only truly independent (and therefore impotent) union. "But any decision is meaningless if you have 3 per cent inflation an hour. And they will not index wages to inflation. Inflation is in their interest—they live on it."

The Yugoslav legacy of "self-management," explains labor expert Mihail Arandarenko, means that there is little chance of a Lech Walesa rising to challenge the establishment. Since workers theoretically took part in the management of their factories, no union ever represented the workers of more than one factory. This virtual guild system has allowed the SPS to play one factory off against others in a game of divide and rule. Union leaders are reduced, Arandarenko said, to scrounging state reserves for truckloads of goods such as laundry detergent and chocolate.

But as Yugoslavia "privatizes," according to law professor Dragon Hiber, the SPS has scrapped "self-management" in favor of schemes that give management up to two hundred times more shares per head than workers. Such shares are worthless in an economy so shattered that the major steel manufacturer now cans wild mushrooms. But they could prove valuable once sanctions are lifted.

IT WAS disgust with such corruption that in October drove the ultranationalist Serbian Radical Party out of a coalition with the SPS and into the opposition, prompting December's elections. With his dream of "Greater Serbia" virtually achieved, Radical leader Vojislav Seselj returned to his original agenda—ferocious anti-Communism—and vowed to join the DEPOS party, led by dissident writer Vuk Draskovic, in removing Milosevic.

Every party campaigned hard against the SPS mafia. Standing in front of the federal parliament on the site where police had beaten him in June, Draskovic denounced the SPS as his supporters threw armsful of worthless dinars into the air and screamed for punishment of the "red bandits." "After they sold everything in Serbia," Draskovic cried, "they announced that Serbia was not for sale."

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It was, of course, far too late. In an economy where a newspaper costs a monthly wage, Serbs depend on state television for their information. Its impartiality can be judged by the appearance this year of its director, Miroland Vucelic, on the SPS list of candidates for parliament.

While state TV had been friendly to the Radicals in the run-up to last year's elections, it spent the last few months of 1993 denouncing Seselj as a dangerous wild card likely to disrupt the peace process and drive the West to maintain sanctions. Of course it also performed its now ritual hatchet-job on Draskovic. On the night before the election, for example, opposition leaders were shown attending a party at the French embassy while a voice-over described them as "traitors to the nation."

But the SPS seemed unsure that its media assault would do the job. As the election results trickled in on Monday, the scent of cooked books permeated the electoral commission's press conference. The commission could report figures from all nine of Serbia's provinces except Kosovo, the largely Albanian southern province. But given that the Albanians living there had boycotted the election, the commission had 90 per cent fewer votes to count than normal. So why was it taking so long? Cynics noted that the SPS needed most of Kosovo's 24 seats in order to move from its 101 MPs closer to the 126 necessary for an absolute majority. It could not afford to lose nationalist votes to Seselj or even the new Milosevic puppet "Arkan."

With his firm control over Serbia restored, Milosevic must now hurry for a peace deal that both maintains his grip on Serb-held parts of Bosnia and lifts sanctions. At that point, economists say, the mafia running the SPS will be ready to take their "earnings" into the fledgling legitimate businesses in the rest of Central Europe. Milosevic will then be master both of "Greater Serbia" and its highly concentrated finances.

But it will be a close-run thing. Economists estimate that there is only enough private savings left in the country to keep the war machine oiled for another three to six months. After that, all hell could break loose. Party hacks at the unions might side with the workers for a change, and rural communities, long able to remain immune to inflation by bartering food, might refuse to feed the cities.

Rural Serbia, out of the reach of Belgrade's independent television station, has traditionally supported Milosevic staunchly. But its farmers have shown signs of restiveness lately. When the Serb government tried last July to impose price controls on food, shops emptied. If the dinar economy in the cities breaks down completely, Mihail Arandarenko said, Milosevic may be forced to use the army in order to bring food in from the farms. For there is no emergency reserve, according to Cveticanin: the state officials in charge of it have already slipped it all illegally onto the black market. By May what still circulates in the economy from last July's harvest will be long gone.

Even some of Milosevic's SPS loyalists are starting to jump ship. Zoran Andelic, an SPS textiles mogul, was apparently not convinced that he would ever be able to reap the rewards of sticking with Milosevic until sanctions were lifted. According to Hiber he fled the country and claimed the money collected under his name in an off-shore account in Cyprus.

But others are literally banking on Milosevic's getting a deal in time for them to invest in legitimate enterprises once sanctions are lifted. "This class of war-profiteers and members of the old nomenklatura," Hiber said, "are planning to become big players in the official European markets. They will start their official businesses with the money they have gained in these two or three unfortunate years."

And judging by the international community's pusillanimous reaction to his various crimes to date, Milosevic needn't worry. As electoral figures coming into Belgrade grew more and more questionable, Western diplomats quietly marveled at the Serb leader's "political skills." After the cooked books re-established Milosevic's right to his place at the negotiating table, European Community negotiator Lord Owen hoped for a deal by Christmas. No doubt Milosevic did too.

Fortunately for Milosevic, Lord Owen has a reliable record of appeasement. According to the Oxford historian Mark Almond, it was his Foreign Office that arranged in 1978 for Queen Elizabeth to knight the Rumanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. That's probably more than even the most deluded SPS member could hope for. Early access to Western markets is all they want. □

There Oughta Be a Law

IAN ALEXANDER

DJIBOUTI

SOME say neighboring Djibouti is as close as any sensible person would get to Somalia. "It's crazy in there," snaps a just-returned German journalist, as if slamming shut the top on a particularly pestiferous Pandora's box. Soothing his dust-caked throat with bottles of Heineken's in the Djibouti Sheraton Hotel bar, he moans, "You can't tell who are the good people, and who the bad. In Mogadisho, one neighborhood is lawful, and the next is frightening. I can't name one Somali as a friend. Can you?"

As it happens, I can count a score or more Somalis as friends; further, having just completed my fourth visit in less than a year, I can say that most sections of Somalia, including Mogadisho, are law abiding.

Granted, it took a while for me to get the principles straight—principles that have so far completely eluded Washington policy makers:

Survival. For well over twenty years, life has been an unbroken hardship for the vast mass of Somalis; naturally, the overwhelming priority is to provide for one's immediate family.

Trust. In true Islamic fashion, Somalis trust the most those closest to them; by definition, the closer to being a blood brother, the more trustworthy.

Freedom. After nearly 22 years under the despotic regime of Siad Barre, Somali leaders, workers, and farmers shun all but the most limited government, cherishing their liberty to the point of anarchy.

Peace. The Somali tradition is an oral one, sometimes endlessly so, as

Mr. Alexander is a longtime observer of the Middle Eastern scene.

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discussions, briefings, and arguments roll on; the corresponding enthusiasm for talking out differences rather than fighting is abiding, except for a treacherous few.

This is not to deny that there are bands of brigands roaming cities, towns, and countryside; that 2 "warlords" out of 15 major tribal leaders are murderous villains; that solid, straight business agreements are rare, whether between Somalis, or between Somalis and foreigners. The relative lawlessness in today's Somalia, however, stems from the horrific conditions under which the people lived during Siad Barre's dictatorship, the latter half of which was roundly supported by the United States.

WHILE the media glare focuses on Aidid and his cutthroats (accounting for a minuscule portion of the body politic) almost no coverage apart from several landmark stories in the *Wall Street Journal* is given the quietly heroic efforts of Somalis to rehabilitate themselves. They are getting, by the way, little or no tangible support from the United Nations' UNISOM contingent, which is bent on enforcing Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali's determination that the country remain undivided, whatever the popular will.

Reasonable men can differ about whether President Bush was right to send troops into Somalia in December 1992. The same reasonable men would not, however, find arguable:

—the predictable fecklessness of such an action limited to humanitarian distribution of food and medicine, and not including the equally humanitarian disarming—if not removal—of malcontents, General Farah Aidid foremost among them;

—the cynical barbarism of General Aidid, whose troops "guarded" warehouses stuffed with relief agencies' food and medicine throughout most of 1992, only doling out small amounts to faithful supporters or to those paying outrageous prices;

—the incomprehensibility of seeking to capture or kill Aidid one day, then providing him U.S. military transportation and protection the next;

—the total lack of strategic awareness in President Clinton's announced intention to cut and run on March 31, whether or not order has been restored. (This reporter was in Cambodia in 1970 and smelled the burning rubber of Vietcong sneakers screeching to a halt, just beyond President Nixon's announced fifty-kilometer invasion limit, there to await the end of the sixty-day incursion.)

What has escaped Foggy Bottom planners is self-evident to numbers of hapless GIs, one of whom sighed: "What good does it do just to distribute food and supplies? As soon as we leave, Aidid's people will take everything back and extend their reign of misery even further."

That kind of sentiment is generally felt, both indicating the obvious weakness in the U.S. "policy" and suggesting the beginning of a Vietnam mentality toward the Somali action. The October gaffes by Ranger units were bitterly felt by the men themselves, coming as they did as a result of poor intelligence—the same glaringly weak intelligence that allowed Farah Aidid to elude U.S. troops for more than six months in a relatively small quarter of the Somali capital.

U.S. policy failures in Somalia cut across party lines. No one is blameless, not Bush nor Clinton—nor, for that matter, Carter and Reagan, in whose administrations the decisions were made to back and keep backing Siad Barre.

The failures have, moreover, created an international atmosphere wherein despots of all sizes, shapes, and hues feel free to do whatever they please, knowing that American statecraft will ultimately accommodate their persistence. Pragmatism was never meant to be thus.

THOSE who despair of lawlessness in Somalia should consider the need for rules that would instruct policy development toward the nettlesome mini-states of the developing world, where it is clear the next several years' challenges will arise.

1. On the presumably rare occasions when it is deemed that U.S. force must be committed, make certain that a) the cause is reasonably just, and b) we are prepared to do what is necessary. Shortly after U.S. troops arrived in Mogadisho, television cameras captured the spectacle of a U.S. soldier, on orders of his commander, releasing hundreds of offensive weapons found in a Mogadisho house. This brought to mind the abrupt end of Desert Storm, when General Schwarzkopf and several key advisors reportedly were on the brink of resignation when ordered to curtail the allied offensive short of capturing Baghdad and deposing Saddam Hussein, inaction few would today argue was wise.

2. When an objective is set and agreed, change course only in view of overwhelmingly changed circumstances. Can it be seriously argued that Aidid, whose writ runs to perhaps 10—certainly no more than 15—per cent of the city of Mogadisho and whose "army" comprises some three to five thousand irregulars, was uncapturable?

3. If the United States, however reluctantly, is to serve as "the world's policeman," let it accept the role with commitment and grace, and incorporate both protection and training of local cadres for progressive self-protection. Time and again over the years, American humanitarian deployment of military peace-keepers has ended with a return to the brutal, often lawless *status quo ante*—consider Nicaragua in the Thirties and the Dominican Republic in the Sixties, as well as Somalia in the Nineties. With the sole exception of Grenada, U.S. humanitarian forces have typically been withdrawn without first assuring that local authorities were capable of maintaining basic law and order.

4. Such actions may be in association with other countries' forces; they should *never* be undertaken with American forces subservient to a non-American commander.

5. Perhaps most important, such interventionist actions should always be an honorable mix of enlightened self-interest and compassion, never solely the one or the other.

From the vantage point of the Djibouti Sheraton bar, or a Foggy Bottom conference room, or the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, things may look lawless in Somalia, and in many respects they indeed are. Let the press pundits and diplomats concerned, however, remove the beams of reckless policy innovation from their own eyes, before they would cast the motes out of the wretched Somalis'. Let us set rules of intervention and engagement which match our national will and inclinations. Once involved, let us have the courage to stand by those rules, despite the inevitable twists along the way. □

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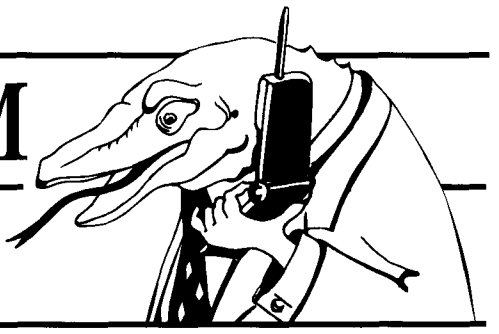
RANDOM WALK



■ Everyone knows "entitlements" are bankrupting the country, so naturally the Clinton Administration is busy looking for new things that we can all be entitled to.

But first the good news. The Administration announced last month that it is ready to "support removal, over time and under appropriate conditions, of judicial and legislative restrictions on all types of telecommunications companies: cable, telephone, utilities, television, and satellite." It's about time—for years, I've been urging my friends in Congress to do this. The technological capacity of this industry is already so many light years ahead of the barnacle-encrusted FCC that further regulatory dabbling is an exercise in absolute futility. Not so long ago FCC bureaucrats were predicting there would be 1 million cellular telephones in the U.S. by the year 2000. There are already 13 million. Uncle Sam willing, there will be closer to 100 million by 2000.

Since the White House can't effectively regulate the telecommunications industry, Al Gore and his technonerds are busy inventing a whole new realm of off-budget entitlements for the modemless masses. Mr. Gore's recent speeches are an odd mixture of populist rhetoric from the Seventies with Nineties technobabble. The result is dangerous. He complains of the trend of the "information rich getting richer and the information poor getting poorer." He talks about barring "electronic redlining" and creating "public right-of-ways" on the information highway.

Gore wants the "less fortunate sectors of the population" to have assured access to the information services of the future "through subsidies or other forms of a public interest tithe." What all this mush means is that Mr. Gore wants to build a high-tech welfare state for society's "information have-nots." Does this mean a cellular telephone in every car? Universal access to MTV?

Actually, the way to assure universal access is to break down remaining government barriers to entry and then allow the sharks to eat the minnows. Technology and cut-throat competition have proved to be the great populist equalizers. Computers, TVs, cellular phones, VCRs, CDs, and modems have fallen so rapidly in price that they already are de facto universally available. Moreover, the last time Congress tried to help lower-income communications consumers, it gave us the cable-TV regulation bill. Now cable is spiraling out of reach of the poor.

So Al, if you're genuinely concerned about America's "information have-nots," leave this $700-billion globally competitive industry alone. I don't need any more interference on my Mercedes carphone.

"It was merely a technical adjustment in the market, Mr. Bedinger. Sorry, you've been wiped out."

■ The recent spate of good economic news has all of Washington abuzz with self-congratulatory back slapping. A smiling Lloyd Bentsen announced the Clinton economic plan is working exactly as intended. The alleged recovery is finally here to stay, thanks to new taxes.

But what kind of a recovery is this anyway? A recent analysis by Prudential Securities' analyst Mark Melcher shows that it's a pretty meek one. Fully two and a half years after the trough of the recession, both employment and GDP growth are trudging along at about half the pace of a normal recovery. Comparing this recovery with those following the six previous post–World War II recessions, annual GDP growth has averaged just 2.2 per cent, versus 4.5 per cent yearly for the normal recovery. When I asked my old friend Paul Craig Roberts at Cato to explain all the cheerleading over such uninspiring results he noted that this is "exactly what government does in education to define success: they just lower the standards." Apparently the era of declining expectations has arrived after all.

Half speed ahead.

■ "When I use a word it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more, nor less." Is that Humpty Dumpty or CBO Director Robert Reichauer? Later this month CBO will rule on whether the $100-billion-plus health-care payroll premiums in Hillary's health plan are a "tax." My sources say that CBO is prepared to rule that these funds are not a "tax," but rather a "contribution." That way the health plan can be pushed safely "off budget" and the Clintons can boast that their plan does not raise taxes.

Just 18 months ago, when Congress passed an almost identical mandatory health program for the United Mine Workers, paid for by coal companies, the CBO declared these funds must be counted as taxes. "The coal company payments into the fund are compulsory. . . . Therefore they are scored as federal revenues." So that's a tax, but now identical funding is a "contribution." That's through the looking-glass, all right. —GEKKO

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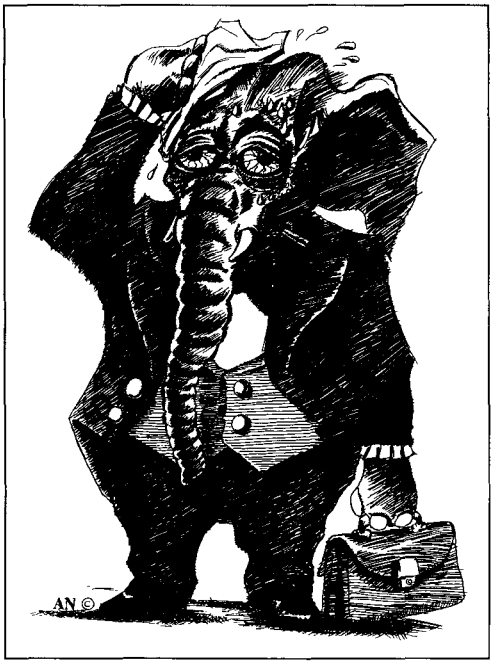

A Conservative Manifesto

CAN THE G.O.P. TAKE AMERICA BACK?

While Democrats busily work to transform America into a nation of favor-seekers, Republicans have done little to resist them. But if they don't, someone else will--for better, or for worse.

MALCOLM WALLOP

TODAY government touches almost everything in America and harms almost everything it touches. Federal, state, and local governments together spend 42 out of every 100 dollars we earn. Those who do the taxing and spending have long since ceased to work for the people as a whole. Rather, they work for themselves and for their clients—the education industry, the welfare culture, public-employee unions, etc. Most Americans sense that our ever-rising taxes are feeding a machine hostile to our values. They ask: "Who represents *us*? Who's on *our* side?"

The Democratic Party, inescapably, represents the interests and values of those who live by the state. Recently *The New Republic* carried this assessment: "But of course the hegemony of the political Left in America did not begin with the Clinton Administration." In fact, Roosevelt's New Deal made the federal bureaucracy into a corps of millions who have been remaking America in accord with their material self-interest, social self-image, and collectivist ideology. Liberal government employees hire their own kind, buy schoolbooks written by their own kind, and fund hundreds of advocacy groups, endowments for the arts and humanities, and their own radio and television network.

What has been the result of the Left's hegemony? Within living memory this was still the free country described by Tocqueville 150 years ago, where families could make new lives without the interference of armies of bureaucrats. But over one generation government has doubled the amount of money it takes from us, has increasingly deprived us of control over our own lives, has turned our public spaces over to criminals and our public schools into factories of ignorance. It has driven us apart on the basis of race and even of sex and, in the name of tolerance, has made us intolerant.

Republican politicians, however, have been passing up the opportunity to represent our basically productive, conservative country against its parasitic, leftist government. In 1968, 1972, 1980, 1984, and 1988 the American people elected Republican Presidents (and, for six years during the 1980s, a Republican Senate) who asked for votes as defenders of society against government. Once elected, however, many Republicans promptly put on their tuxes and became concerned with "governance." Because they were in power, complaints against the modern state became complaints against themselves. The liberal agenda now had perfect cover.

Even today, conservatives cannot fully shed the illusion that "we" are the establishment, that the U.S. Government is still the house of Washington and Lincoln, and that to speak ill of it is unpatriotic. Thus George Will's latest book, *Restoration*, a compendium of big government's corrupting effects, nevertheless disdains what Mr. Will calls "pillage and burn conservatism," which he calls "unlovely." He and many other conservatives assume that big government is here to stay and that the only question is who will run it. They are wrong. Disdain for modern government is wise, patriotic—yes, even lovely.

Crashing Welfare States

THROUGHOUT the world big government is in a crisis of legitimacy. In South America there is a rush to privatize social security and medical care. The Japanese, recognizing that industrial policy bred corruption as well as inefficiency, are deregulating the economy. In Europe, welfare states that spend half of GNP or more are collapsing and dragging with them all the mainstream parties that have acted as managers rather than as representatives of the people—espe-

Senator Wallop (R., Wyo.) is retiring from the Senate at the end of his current term.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALAN NAHIGIAN

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Why Are Catholics So Wimpy?

The Vatican thunders against abortion, tyrants, illicit sex, consumerism, dissenting theologians, disobedient priests and nuns, and more. But walk into your average parish. Where's the beef? We get crumbs — and platitudes. We don't hear much, if anything, about the Church's teachings on abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, pre-marital sex, pornography, the indissolubility of marriage — "too controversial." Birth control and Hell are taboo subjects. Pop psychology and feel-good theology are "in." Sin is "out," prompting one to wonder why Christ bothered to get crucified.

Cowardly clerics, fearful of being politically incorrect or challenging the flock or offending some stray soul, keep the full Catholic message from us. In effect we're blindfolded — left to stumble in the dark, prey to false prophets and the sirens of the world, not even knowing why we're Catholic.

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cially the conservative parties that (with the exception of the Thatcher government) aped the socialists. Voters have had little choice but to turn to extremist groups, or simply to turn their backs on government.

In our country too a spreading disaffection with government is looking for political expression. In 1992 Ross Perot was taken seriously as a presidential candidate because he expressed the popular discontent with big government far more clearly than either Republicans or Democrats. (To this day most of his followers either don't know or can't believe that Perot wants to raise taxes.) Yet, under Republican and Democratic Administrations alike, America is bucking the world's trend and moving to more statism. Who will put a stop to it? The Democratic Party has no choice but to be the party of big government. If the Republican Party refuses to express the people's opposition, someone else will. Politics, like nature, abhors a vacuum.

Of, by, and for the People?

TO BEGIN WITH, big government has largely deprived us of self-government. We get to vote for senators, congressmen, and Presidents. But we have less and less control over our lives because we have no control over the people who make the rules by which we live—about how we make and sell our products, which groups get what preferences, how we can use our land. These are the millions of bureaucrats who work for the IRS, the EPA, the FCC, the EEOC, BATF, the CPSC, OSHA, and innumerable others. They develop an arrogance of power which leads to the delusion that they are above the law—cf. the recent assertion by the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, Jim Baca, that if Congress refused to enact a restriction on livestock grazing on public lands, he would "be implementing it administratively."

Unlike the visionary government of Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln, we march ever closer to the administrative despotism of which Tocqueville warned: "It covers the surface of society with a network of small complicated rules, minute and uniform, through which the most original minds and the most energetic characters cannot penetrate, to rise above the crowd. The will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent, guided; men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting: such a power does not destroy, but it prevents existence; it does not tyrannize, but it compresses, extinguishes, and stupefies a people, till each nation is reduced to be nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd."

Time was when government in America meant mostly local government, but the federal judiciary, in the name of civil rights, has gone a long way toward making state and local governments into administrative subdivisions of the central government. People cannot banish porn shops or vagrants from their towns, or even set the speed limits on their states' roads. Judges have taken over school systems and dictated zoning ordinances and tax increases. They even strike down referenda approved by the whole people. Voting for local officials, then, is often meaningless because they are powerless, while voting for national officials is losing meaning because they are all running a system that is too big to control.

Much corruption comes from the ignorant and greedy hope that the government's guarantees of security mean we will get more than we have paid for. Wrong. Among the most blatantly false guarantees is President Clinton's claim that government-organized medical benefits "can never be taken away." Of course they can! Throughout Europe, the government has long since taken "free" medical care away through ever-rising taxes, ever-rising user charges, and ever-lengthening waiting lines. In Canada you stand a greater chance of dying while waiting for a heart operation than you do of dying on the operating table. We should have learned our lesson from Social Security. The government now takes 15 per cent of our income throughout our working lives in exchange for a promise that our benefits will "never be taken away." Then it spends the money. At retirement it gives us chicken feed, and then taxes *that*. How much will we have to pay to learn that government cannot create wealth, and that its attempts to guarantee benefits impoverish everyone?

But the most corrupting thing about entitlements is that when individuals look to the state to peform functions that they or their families ought to perform, families decay and personal responsibility shrinks. Today some two in three black children and one in six white children are born out of wedlock. Not very many years ago the illegitimacy rate among blacks was no higher than that among whites today, and that among whites was barely perceptible. These statistics should not be misconstrued, by the way: this is not a black problem, it is a systemic problem. The illegitimacy rate today in Sweden, a country with virtually no minority population but with every entitlement known to man, is almost equal to that of American blacks. The conclusions are inescapable: people, regardless of race, who are permitted by society to engage in whatever activity they choose without assuming responsibility for it, and who expect the state to perform the functions traditionally reserved for heads of households, will see a decline in families and in civilization.

Will we go the way of Argentina? Sixty years ago Argentina was second only to the United States in per-capita wealth. Then its middle class listened to Juan Perón's siren song of entitlements. Taxes, regulations, and interest-group power soon reduced the country to genteel poverty, then to grinding poverty and food riots. Now it has changed course—it is even privatizing social security. We, meanwhile, are heading where Argentina was, pulled along in part by Hillary Clinton's imitation of Evita Perón.

The public educational system is also stripping us of civilization. Fifty years ago the public schools were small and answered to parents. Today they are huge and answer to judges and to bureaucrats whose tech-

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niques coddle students' egos while emphasizing political correctness. And so grades have risen along with self-esteem. The real outcome? Test scores show almost half of adults to be functionally illiterate and innumerate; they also show a drastic drop in the number of high achievers, stagnation or slow decline for the bulk of students, and disaster for those at the low end.

In cultural and social matters, for most of our history, government acted mostly by staying out of the way. When it did act, it acted in a way that fostered decency and responsibility. The laws protected marriage. Religion was honored throughout public life. Today, by contrast, the U.S. Government professes neutrality on questions of morality while actively undermining the prevailing moral standards. While it is not for government to prescribe morality, a government without a moral base fosters a citizenry without responsibility and a nation devoid of civility. It is no wonder that under our government's current mindset—prohibiting us from questioning any alternative lifestyle; financing single women bearing children out of wedlock and the resultant idleness by their boyfriends; proscribing public reference to God; and imposing tax penalties for married couples—individual responsibility is disappearing.

While government inserts itself into so many facets of our lives where it has no business, it fails to meet its most basic responsibilities. Our fundamental freedom from physical harm is no longer protected. Families do not dare let children out of their sight, lest they be taken and robbed, beaten, or worse. Older people and all women long ago lost the ability to move freely about the cities at night. Even by day, city streets are becoming gauntlets of bums who straddle the line between begging and mugging. The police? They will fine you for not wearing seatbelts, but when the riots came in Los Angeles, police hesitant to act for fear of exacerbating the violence left the law-abiding citizens to defend themselves.

"Taxes Are the Price We Pay for Civilization." So says an engraving on the IRS building in Washington. On the contrary, today taxes have become the price we pay to support people who deny our civilization. As government has grown, our civilization has declined. The Democratic Party wants government to grow even more, and, as witness the 1990 Bush budget agreement, leaders of the Republican Party have earned us the title of tax collectors for the welfare state.

The American people are reacting to these failures of government by trying to have as little to do with it as possible. In the most banal of matters, Federal Express, faxes, voice mail, E-mail, and telephones have long since replaced first-class mail. But are we going to be able to get away from state-organized medical care as easily as we've escaped the post office? People are building walls and gatehouses around residential areas. Inside, the streets are private property governed by such rules as the owners choose to make. The same goes for shopping malls, where there is, for example, no vagrancy because the government's abolition of anti-vagrancy laws does not apply. This leads one to ask: Wouldn't it be nice if we Americans owned *all* the towns we live in? Private schooling, like private policing, is gaining favor as families assume responsibility for the education of their children. Millions seek to cut tax bites by taking part in the burgeoning "second economy." The IRS reports that "voluntary compliance" is down to 82 per cent and dropping. But wouldn't it be nice if we were *not* forced to become a nation of chiselers? Private secession from rotten big governments is familiar to many Europeans and all too familiar to those who lived under Communism. But why not simply take back America's public space?

"Where do you want that 'I ♥ MOTHER' tattoo, Oedipus?"

Restoring Our Country

HOW DO WE do that? Tinkering with this or that detail—"policy wonkmanship"—cannot make big government user-friendly. Nor will it do much good to "reinvent" government—that is to make its operations more slender and efficient. If one accepts the premise of big government, its clients will turn every reform into an excuse to grow. Nor, finally, can it do much good to make sure that big government is run by good people with the best intentions. Many of today's government employees *are* good people. The problem is precisely that government pays good people to do things that are inherently bad. There is no good, no healthy way to run a system of entitlements, school monopolies, and national rules that pre-empt self-government. Nor is there a conservative or "responsible" or "businesslike" way to run a system that spends nearly half of GNP. Spending that much, doing that much, has its own ruinous socialist dynamic.

That is why we must cut.

Cut taxes—not mainly because they are bad for the economy, but in order to put the means of liberty back into people's hands. In the absence of war, federal taxes

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should take no more than about 10 per cent of GNP. State and local burdens combined should probably not exceed the federal burden. In short, half of what we pay now should be the absolute maximum.

Almost as important, taxes should be simple. Special provisions in tax laws are so many tools by which the government rewards its friends and injects unfairness into our lives. A "flat tax"—equal percentages for all taxpayers, with no deductions—would avoid the current hypocrisy of nominal taxes indexed upward, while taxes after loopholes are actually indexed downward.

Stop thinking of entitlements as rights. Nowhere in the Constitution does it say that anyone is "entitled" to the earnings of others. We must rid our nation of the idea of "entitlement." While government must help citizens in time of emergency, current programs, mandated by the Federal Government, foster dependency, not responsibility. We must revive the idea that public assistance should be local and temporary, not permanent. As federal taxes and the Federal Government's reach are cut, more revenues and authority can be assumed by state and local governments. Welfare can then be provided by local officials to those they recognize as needy. Also, we should make Social Security an option, not an entitlement. It will eventually get rid of itself as people choose to invest their retirement funds in secure savings, rather than government promises.

Don't socialize medicine—privatize it. Medicare has already distorted, bureaucratized, and increased the cost of medical care. The Clinton health plan would extend the federal control of health care to all citizens, not just retirees. Instead of increasing federal taxes, bureaucracy, and power, why not allow all Americans to recieve tax credits for the purchase of health insurance? And give citizens the same right of choice that the Clintons now have as federal employees. They can choose from a range of competitive private insurance plans. All citizens deserve this option.

De-regulate America. Regulations on commerce should establish standards that are few, simple, and fair. Instead, regulation has become an arbitrary distortion and an engine of privilege as "alphabet soup" agencies issue a never-ending stream of commands based only remotely on the original legislation. This can be changed by enforcing a Supreme Court decision of two generations ago (*Schechter* v. *U.S.*) that prohibited the delegation of Congress's legislative power. If Congress is forced to vote on the imposition of rules, they are likelier to be fewer and simpler.

End federal tyranny over state and local governments. Not only should we repeal all federal unfunded mandates on state and local governments, we should eliminate all federal "aid" except for national emergencies. The greatest burden on the states and their citizens is the financing of federal mandates. Legislators enjoy the greatest luxury in life, the ability to spend other people's money, but a corollary is the ability to require others to spend money they don't have on dubious priorities. We must impose a moratorium on such mandates. We should also pass a law, as specified by Article 3, Section 2 of the Constitution, restricting the federal court system's capacity to review decisions by state courts. This would restore flexibility that states and localities have lost, expanding diversity.

Restore personal responsibility. If we accept the notion that government is responsible for taking care of every individual need (real or imagined) and resolving every social crisis (real or created), we will not restore the civilization for which our taxes are supposed to pay. To restore *personal* responsibility, government must simply be gotten out of the way. A government program which began in order to assist needy widows and orphans—Aid to Families with Dependent Children—has become a federal subsidy to single mothers. How can the mothers be held accountable for their behavior, when the government pays them more for each out-of-wedlock birth? And why should the delinquent fathers act responsibly, when they know the government will not force them to assist?

Abolish racial preferences. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 explicitly outlaws racial preferences; there is no way of making room for them under our Constitution without ultimately destroying it. Whether the practice in question is minority set-asides, race-norming in testing, or voting districts drawn to guarantee the election of minorities, affirmative action perverts the concept of equality and has none but evil consequences. For over two centuries those who gave up their lives in defense of America did so as Americans. Military cemeteries around the globe testify only to death in defense of liberty. Row upon row of white stones record no distinction based on race—only the ultimate sacrifice for freedom. The unknown soldier's only epitaph is: "Here lies an American soldier known but to God." Any government that is not strictly blind in matters of race is quite simply un-American.

Restore control of education to parents. Each level of government should simply give parents a voucher for precisely the sum of money that it spends per pupil. The parents can then spend that voucher at *any* school. The venom with which the Establishment is fighting this common-sense proposal should be proof enough that it is fighting for its own corrupt interests.

Curb crime. Over a century and a half ago Tocqueville noted that crime flourished in Europe because the public there were spectators in the struggle between the criminals and the government, while in America there was little crime because criminals had to contend with an aroused and armed populace. Decent people *were* the government. Obviously, things have changed since then; it is time to change them back. Until that happens more and more ordinary Americans will take chances with the law by carrying weapons for the protection that the police do not provide. They should have the option of doing this lawfully—I want criminals, not lawful Americans, to live in fear of life and limb.

Allow communities to set their own moral standards. The Federal Government cannot set moral standards, but it can step out of the way. Prayer was banished from schools, abortion imposed, criminals em-

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CRIME AND THE DEMOCRATS

Some Democrats want crime as a campaign issue. But they also seem to want criminals as voters.

HAROLD JOHNSON

THERE IS NO JOY in being exposed as a phony on a 50,000-watt radio station. Just ask Orange County Assemblyman Tom Umberg, a charismatic young lawmaker who was one of the rising lights of the California Democratic Party—until his recent undressing at the hands of a pair of talk-show hosts on Los Angeles's KFI-AM. Umberg's carefully constructed image as a crime-fighter and independent-minded, "conservative" Democrat shriveled like the witch doused with water, under questioning from John Kobylt and Ken Chiampou of KFI's *John and Ken* show.

The assemblyman's embarrassment is worth recounting, because it carries a larger, ominous message for his party at the dawn of an election year. The issue of safe streets—and why we don't have them—suddenly dominates the political landscape, and that's unsettling news for a party whose leaders in Sacramento have perfected the art of quietly suffocating strong anti-crime legislation.

The fate of 12-year-old Polly Klaas, kidnapped and murdered alleg-

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THE WEEK IN THE WEST

■ The Commission on State Finance says California's deficit could reach $4 billion by the year's end. We had a hunch things were bad when we heard that Governor Wilson had entered the state's name in The Publishers Clearing House Sweepstakes.

■ Aside from costing taxpayers millions of dollars every year by introducing unfair and inefficient trading practices, reverse discrimination exacerbates the social tensions that are corroding American life. But don't expect the public "servants" who created this rigged system to dismantle it. So thanks are owed to Cal-State Hayward Professor Harry Glynn Custred Jr., who, along with a group of like-minded academics, has plotted an end-run around the politicians. His California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI), for which signatures are now being gathered, would outlaw the awarding of public contracts by quota rather than quality. Currently, contractors who would work for the state are ordered to award 15 per cent of their subcontracts to minority-owned businesses, 5 per cent to firms headed by women, and 3 per cent to companies run by disabled vets. This, despite the lack of evidence that subcontractors eligible to fill these quotas can be found in the requisite numbers. Indeed, contractors regularly complain that they find it difficult, if not impossible, to comply with the law. The system allows the same affirmative-action companies to be used again and again and again to meet quotas, with the curious result that some of the most prosperous subcontractors in the state continue to enjoy the official designation of "disadvantaged" and the preferential treatment that goes with it. And in many cases, a firm receives minority status merely because it boasts a figurehead top executive who fits the proper gender or race classification. CCRI offers an opportunity to return to a nobler vision of civil rights, one that counts individual merit above sex or skin tone. To aid the effort, call 510-644-4256.

■ "This could be a logistical nightmare," comments Bobby Jones, police chief of Great Falls, Montana, on the Brady bill. He's not alone in his qualms about the new law calling for a five-day waiting period and background check for anyone wishing to buy a handgun. "Smaller [police] departments worry about cascading paperwork," reports the Associated Press; "others fear that gaps in computer networks may miss some felons or deny guns to legal purchasers. Still others have questions: How do you check for mental problems when records are sealed? How do you determine habitual drug use?" California's experience with a two-week waiting period for gun purchases offers little reason for optimism that the five-day federal requirement will have much effect. The tide of violent crime hasn't exactly ebbed, after all. When more politicians put more focus on controlling criminals rather than controlling inanimate objects—at that point we might actually get some relief from the dread that stalks our streets.

■ Seattle's touchy-feely city officials were looking for a New Age police chief, and they apparently found one in San Diego lawman Norman Stamper. When he met City Councilman Cheryl Chow for an interview, she threw him this tough one: Which color best matches your personality? Mr. Stamper identified himself as a "red," someone with a yen for change, adventure, risk. He further impressed the liberals by expressing only lukewarm support for Washington's tough new sentencing law for three-time offenders, passed by rubes in the state's hinterlands, while gushing about warm-fuzzy plans for "a strange and wondrous coalition of people who perhaps aren't even talking to each other today." Well, let's all have a hug, commented one local columnist. Meanwhile,

"How should I describe you in my chronicle: as the discoverer of fire or as the first man to pollute the atmosphere?"

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Seattle's criminal classes are quaking—or is that chuckling?—in their boots.

■ New York rug merchant Fernando Mateo made a splash by coming to L.A. to launch a goods-for-guns swap. But he will not, thank you, turn in his own revolver in exchange for concert tickets or hamburgers. Turns out he once used the weapon to defend his store against some thugs. It reminds us of Senator Dianne Feinstein, who as mayor of San Francisco purchased a handgun for protection, but favors strict gun-control for everybody else. Or Carl Rowan, who nagged for years that law-abiding people had no business owning handguns—only to produce a pistol when confronted by an intruder at his spread in Washington. Liberal hypocrisy marches on.

■ California Democratic gubernatorial candidate John Garamendi has gone out on a limb and proposed a repeal of the Inmate Bill of Rights, even as there are reports that some prisons are becoming more brutal by the day. In fact, we hear inmates are having to endure long lines before using the tennis courts and Jacuzzis.

■ *Strangers in the Senate* is the title of Barbara Boxer's new book. But *Memoirs of a Sore Winner* would be more accurate. Carping about the campaign of her Republican opponent, Bruce Herschensohn, Mrs. Boxer harrumphs about how negative his first round of ads were. In fact, counters *San Diego Union-Tribune*'s John Marelius, "the first Herschensohn spots attacked congressional perks and never mentioned Boxer. They were quite similar in tone to Boxer's primary ads depicting an out-of-touch, male-dominated Senate." We're looking forward to 1998—when California voters can give Mrs. Boxer a chance to write *Stranger in the Private Sector*.

■ Actor Don Johnson, dissenting from the Hollywood herd: "There was something that was creeping into the hyperbole during the [1992] election [campaign] that bothered me. It was 'Let's get those rich guys, because they're the reason that we're in all this trouble.' . . . My feeling was, let's not penalize people for being successful, let's encourage success. That's what America's about." Scratch him from the Clintons' next Hollywood dinner party.

■ Nevada's Democratic Governor Bob Miller, seeking re-election this year, can point to a record that includes imposing the state's first business tax, raising sales and gasoline taxes, and foisting larger state industrial-insurance premiums on employers. And you thought Vegas was famous only for *one*-armed bandits.

■ Is the sea-lion population off the California coast out of control, or well within acceptable numbers? That question elicits only watery evasions from federal regulators, but the facts are less ambiguous: The number of sea lions up and down the West Coast has risen by at least 100 per cent since enactment of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 to more than 100,000 within U.S. waters today. And these are sea lions with an attitude, interfering with fishing off Monterey, making docks in San Francisco an obstacle course for pedestrians, and even gobbling up the (endangered!) steelhead trout. If the feds don't seem inclined to do anything about it, it's a reminder of the degree to which they defer to environmentalist hardliners. Oh, yes, sea lions also attract sharks to our waters. And who said the environmental movement lacked teeth?

■ Purists in the environmentalist movement used to hail the bicycle as "ethical" transportation. But the party line is changing as mountain bikes have been developed that allow blue-collar types to explore back country that was supposed to be locked off to all but the animals and select humans of higher demographic stock. In Marin County, officals are trying to close bike trails carved without permission in hills north of San Francisco. Some of the bikers reportedly have retaliated by setting booby traps along one of the most popular trails targeted by the regulators. Big Brother has no fun, so why should anyone else?

■ Actress Kathy Najimy, a star of the movie *Hocus Pocus*, was asked on the *Today* show how she prepared for her role as a witch. Najimy replied that she "talked to Gloria Steinem about [it] because she's the goddess of the world and knows everything. She said that . . . originally, some of the women who were said to be witches were health-care workers and midwives. That's where the notion of baby-eating came [from], because they would perform abortions sometimes, so the women would go in pregnant and come out not, and thus the gossip about baby-eating, which is, of course, untrue. They were just, like, health-care workers." There's no truth to the rumor Mrs. Najimy is helping design Hillary's health plan.

■ A study of the instructional habits of the faculty at University of California in Berkeley found that about half of full professors taught one or no undergraduate courses in the 1991–92 school year. Considering the liberal leanings of so many of these folks, we wish they wouldn't exert themselves quite so much.

■ As a result of many years of a "welcome vagrants" policy, Santa Monica boasts a thriving population of street people who quite aggressively make them-

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selves right at home, thank you. Some have taken to using coupons from discarded pizza boxes to phone for free Domino's pizzas to be motored to the lawn of City Hall. No word on whether the local ACLU will sue if they pray before eating.

■ Governor Pete Wilson, author of the biggest tax increase in the history of any state, has awarded Bill Clinton a C- for job performance, partly because of his massive tax hike. Kind of like Dillinger calling Pretty Boy Floyd a thief.

WEST WORLD

■ If, as looks likely, enough signatures have been gathered by gun-owner-rights groups to trigger recall election for gun-control-zealot **David Roberti**, Democratic leader of California State Senate, don't assume he'll win in a walk. He'd need 50 per cent of vote. And he won new San Fernando Valley–based district with less than that amount in last election. . . . Roberti will be term-limited out of legislature next year. He'll be succeeded as Senate president by volatile **Bill Lockyer** (D., Hayward), who says he's found a bogeyman to help raise Democratic funds. Lockyer spooks donors with specter of **Rob Hurtt**, conservative GOP manufacturer recently elected to state Senate from Orange County. Hurtt's crime? Trying to strategize a GOP takeover of legislature. In private life, Hurtt's a practicing Christian. Lockyer hopes such sin will scare **Barbra Streisand** and similar richfolk into raining dollars on Dems. . . . Some partisans of **Joe Ghougassian**, former Reagan Administration official who narrowly lost a December 28 special election for San Diego state Senate seat, suggest aides to **Pete Wilson** may have quietly weighed in on side of **Steve Peace**, Democratic victor, to keep Ghougassian from moving the GOP Senate caucus to right. . . . *San Diego Union-Tribune* endorsed Peace, showing again how it has strayed from the conservatism of longtime publisher, **James Copley**. . . . **Mike Woo**, having licked his wounds following defeat by L.A. Mayor **Richard Riordan**, is running for secretary of state, boasting highest name ID (59 per cent) of all Democrats in race, according to poll by Decision Research of San Diego. . . . Sens. **Barbara Boxer** and **Dianne Feinstein** may get chance to shift West Coast's federal courts sharply leftward. The U.S. Judicial Conference, policymaking body of federal judiciary, has asked Congress for 19 new temporary circuit judgeships, including 10 in the 9th Circuit, which covers California.

■ More than 175 phone calls were made from state-education bureaucracies to the campaign against Prop. 174, the school-voucher initiative, according to **Ken Khachigian**, who ran 174 campaign. "It is against the law to use public funds for political campaigns," he points out. . . . Gov. Wilson talks about slashing state spending, but still no action on proposal by former Assemblyman **Tom McClintock** to stop paying inflated union wages and benefits to workers on state construction projects. Flagmen on road work get $16.61 per hour, plus $8.51 in health, pension, vacation, and training benfits. Wilson could cancel porky practice with stroke of a pen and save up to $200 million yearly, says McClintock, now candidate for state controller.

■ In Los Angeles, students **Chris Coker** and **Christine Quianzon** of Occidental College's Conservative Consciousness Coalition organized a "Coming Out Conservative" week, including debate between radio commentator **Bill Press**, who chairs California's Democratic Party, and leftist-turned-rightist **David Horowitz**, who said, "American campuses are less free politically today than they were during the Fifties and McCarthyism." . . . On his radio show, Press recently applauded L.A. TV station KCOP, Channel 13, for running, uncensored, a movie featuring frontal nudity. He lectured dissenting callers on importance of broad-mindedness, suggesting they're prudes. "I love my body. I love my genitals," he gushed. . . . Hollywood executives guffawed when **Dan Quayle** suggested people's behavior could be affected by what they see on TV. But now Hollywood is patting its own back over growing number of pro-gun-control messages inserted into prime-time shows. Says NBC's **Warren Littlefield**: "If we are truly committed as a society, then we must all work together to curtail proliferating handguns." No apologies, yet, to Quayle. . . . Not everybody in entertainment industry hews to its orthodoxies. Says proudly pro-life **Mel Gibson**: "I'd rather be a big mouth than politically correct. There's a kind of phobia about saying anything now . . . 'Politically correct' is just another word for suppression and Nazism, if you ask me. . . . 'We must have an attitude in a group about a certain thing.' And if you don't have that attitude, you're out of the club." . . . MTV's 21-year-old Video Jock Kennedy champions an actor-turned-politician: "**Ronald Reagan**, I loved. . . . He conquered, and he did what he set out to do. And I really admire that. It wasn't that he was the Great Communicator; it was that he communicated great things." . . . On the other hand, there's director **Nora Ephron** (*Sleepless in Seattle*): "I love [Hillary Rodham Clinton]. I'm besotted . . . I would follow her anywhere. . . . Look how smart she is."

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(Continued from page West-1)

edly by a repeat felon, in an instant has focused the public mind.

In one sense, the Klaas outrage is not unique. Police books teem with examples of savagery by often-paroled thugs. But some decree of fate—along with the innocence of her face, and the chilling fact she was stolen from a slumber party in her own home—has made her the poster child of a growing movement demanding that our "protectors" in government finally get tough on toughs.

John and Ken's December 21 broadcast encounter with Tom Umberg may go down as a milestone in this effort, by blowing away the fog that legislative Democrats like to shroud themselves in when dealing with matters of crime and punishment. The talk-show duo were focusing on the legislature's failure to pass sentencing laws that would keep career violent criminals behind bars. They were interviewing Tom Umberg because he's a member of the Assembly Public Safety Committee—a killing ground for strong sentencing bills—who claims he supports many of those very bills.

Over the years, Umberg, as with other Democrats in marginal districts, has developed an elaborate gymnastic routine to conceal from his constituents the degree to which he is a marionette dangling from the fingers of Assembly Speaker Willie Brown. But John and Ken wouldn't let him do his act. No empty boasts or semi-truths were allowed. Instead, the radio men honed in on uncomfortable realities. Such as the fact Umberg is part of Willie Brown's power base. He votes for Brown to be speaker of the Assembly, and thereby helps give him the muscle to stack key committees so they'll knife anti-criminal bills.

When supporters of enhanced-sentencing bills ask the full Assembly to overrule the committees that have stomped on these measures, Umberg abstains from these votes—in effect, voting "no."

And then there's his sit-on-his-hands act concerning the "Three Strikes, You're Out" bill, which was stalled in the Public Safety Committee until public outrage forced an end to the foot-dragging a couple of weeks ago. The "Three-Strikes" measure would essentially throw away the key for any thug convicted of a trio of serious crimes against other people. Mr. Umberg says he supports it—and, indeed, he has introduced a version of his own now that the pressure has become white hot—but why, then, didn't he ask the full Assembly to overrule the "Public Safety" committee when that panel was keeping "Three-Strikes" in cold storage last year?

That was one of the questions put to him on KFI. He responded by not responding—just as he nervously avoided answering queries about why he supports Willie Brown for speaker and why he abstains so often on crime bills, and why he's been known to switch his votes on hot-potato legislation once it's clear Willie Brown can win without his help.

MULTIPLY Tom Umberg by several dozen and you get a legislature full of fancy-step Democrats who give their constituents tough rhetoric on crime while giving Willie Brown their votes. But on KFI the questions kept coming, along with the demands for straight answers. Tom Umberg, previously noted for cool, Kennedyesque charm—and touted as a possible candidate for state attorney general—was eventually reduced to stammering incoherence.

This evening-drive-time disaster for one of the Democrats' stars didn't go unnoticed at the statehouse, where party leaders immediately began moving—or at least *appearing* to move—on long-stalled crime bills. But even now, leading liberals, while voting "yes," loudly grumble about the cost of imprisoning habitual violent offenders, leading skeptics to wonder if these bills won't be mugged further down the legislative pike.

The underlying debate goes to the core of our conscience as a people. To a large degree, our criminal-sentencing structure codifies the ideologies of those whose disdain for traditional notions of retributive punishment is matched only by their faith in the wand-waving powers of social workers and their rehabilitative alchemies.

How much longer will Americans acquiesce in a justice system that mocks justice by being kind to the cruel? Does it not devalue human life when killers on average are set free after fewer than a dozen years? Or when a Damien Williams, who stoned a helpless Reginald Denny merely because of his skin color, can respond with a cocky smile after delivery of a sentence that could have him walking the streets again as soon as 1998? These questions could be the defining challenge of the day, a litmus test of our character. If we cannot summon the confidence in our civilization needed to defend it against the likes of Polly Klaas's murderer or Reginald Denny's tormentor, then we will have deserved the fate that is starting to cast its shadow.

More and more Americans are awakening to these stern realities, and the electoral implications could be dramatic. Which means that the party of Tom Umberg and Willie Brown may finally have to put votes behind their rhetoric. □

A Question of Accreditation

DIVERSITY POLICE

CHARLES HEATHERLY

ONE OF THE constructive things done by Lamar Alexander as George Bush's secretary of education was to face down the Middle States accreditation association's diversity police after they tried withholding accreditation from Baruch College for an inadequate number of minorities on campus. But while Alexander quashed that power play, the campaign goes on to use the accreditation process as a club with which to force a quota-centered multiculturalist

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agenda on higher education. The current flashpoint is the West Coast, where the regional accrediting body, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), is moving toward making "Diversity—or Else" official policy.

Accreditation is life-or-death for a higher-education institution, as the official stamp of academic legitimacy. An unaccredited school would be ineligible for a variety of student financial assistance, and couldn't hope to compete in the top league for applicants. So the six regional accrediting agencies wield tremendous power. They are supposed to be voluntary-membership organizations, deriving finances from subscribing colleges and conducting reviews in a collegial manner. But what if these ostensibly consensual bodies were captured by an activist movement intent not on upholding scholastic excellence but on enforcing lockstep ideology?

That is no longer a theoretical question, as is likely to be revealed by debate on February 23 when the WASC's Commission on Accreditation meets in San Francisco to vote on a new "Policy Statement on Diversity." The new policy could make the re-accrediting process a tool for micromanaging the hiring, admissions, and curriculum policies of member colleges. In the guise of advancing educational standards in "an age of diversity," the accreditation cops will bully an institution for upholding its own educational standards if they conflict with reigning ideology.

And the standard being proposed is political, not educational. The WASC's 1988 *Handbook of Accreditation* provided an early glimpse of the strategy to mandate conformity: WASC "demonstrates its commitment to the increasingly significant educational role played by diversity of ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds among its members by making positive efforts to foster such diversity," it says. Notice how the text moves from an ostensibly objective observation about certain trends in academia to a veiled vow to dictate that these trends be honored and replicated everywhere.

By the next year, the WASC was becoming more candid. A 1989 statement announced a "major new thrust"—"the belief that educational diversity is a fundamental element of quality." And a year later, WASC Executive Director Stephen Weiner could boldly proclaim in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* that "the Commission's expectations regarding diversity affect virtually every aspect of campus life, and, therefore, each of our accrediting standards . . . requires institutions to have equal opportunity and affirmative-action policies."

WILL THESE new "standards" be enforced through the threat of sanctions? That question will dominate the February 23 meeting, and there is good reason for concern. WASC officials have already disregarded the findings of a special "external review panel" that they themselves established to answer critics of the diversity enthusiasm. That panel suggested the focus on diversity was at odds with the "tolerant, collegial, and consultative" traditions of peer review. Undeterred, the WASC has marched on with its diversity "policy statement," now in its fourth draft, having been rewritten again following a January 5 closed meeting of the "Diversity Committee" at which cosmetic changes were accepted, but no disavowal of the possibility of sanctions against offenders.

One observer pessimistic about the outcome of the February 25 meeting is

James Q. Wilson Speaks

A 1990 WASC attempt to impose diversity standards and curricula on the Rand Graduate School drew fire from noted author and UCLA professor James Q. Wilson, a member of Rand's academic board and the California Association of Scholars. On December 18, 1990, Wilson wrote the following to WASC boss Stephen S. Weiner:

"I do not understand the grounds on which your commission can urge, apparently as a condition for future accreditation, that 'the study and analysis of issues related to diversity' and in particular 'race and ethnicity,' are matters on which Rand has an obligation to show 'progress.'"

Further: "I fail to see why an accrediting agency believes it has the responsibility, right, or even the competence to specify what subjects ought to be the object of . . . teaching." Moreover: "Perhaps you have prepared a policy document that explains why, out of all the useful forms of social inquiry that a university might pursue, it is especially important to pursue studies of race and ethnicity, so important that the authority of an accrediting agency ought to be placed behind these."

On February 12, 1991, Weiner wrote that WASC did not "imagine that we have any special virtue or wisdom on this subject. We don't have quotas or cookbook procedures for creating diverse institutions." What WASC wanted was only that all accredited institutions should operate in the public interest and "treat members of their respective communities with respect."

On February 27, Wilson asked Weiner: "What evidence do you have that the students or faculty at RGS feel that they suffer from a lack of respect?" and noted that the WASC letter had directed Rand dean Charles Wolf, Jr. "to submit a special report on diversity by May 1992." It also charged that Rand was missing "opportunities." Countered Wilson: "RGS has an 'opportunity' to do many things . . . when you single out a particular opportunity and state that RAND is not making evident progress in that direction, it can only be because you believe that this opportunity is more important than others, and that an evident lack of progress is an occasion for criticism."

Wilson noted that Rand students were mature adults who hold important jobs. "Are you suggesting," he asked Weiner, "that these men and women are unaware that they live in a multicultural society or that they have given no real thought to the significance of race and ethnicity? If you are, on what grounds do you reach that conclusion?" He summed up: "You in fact have neither evidence nor arguments to support your particular admonitions to Dean Wolf; what you have instead is an all-too-common allegiance to a fashionable slogan: 'diversity.'"

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Thomas Wood, executive director of the California Association of Scholars, who has followed the issue for many years. "I think there is an agenda here, and they are not going to give up," he says.

From the beginning, opposition has been led by Thomas Aquinas College in Santa Paula, a small Catholic institution with a Great Books program. Its president, Thomas Dillon, condemns the proposed diversity policy as "clearly political." "It confuses political and social ends with educational ends—at least it seems to leave little room for an education which is directed solely to the life of the mind . . . The draft . . . fails to establish any necessary connection between 'diversity' and educational quality . . ."

There is still time for other institutions to follow Thomas Aquinas' example. Claremont McKenna College, Pepperdine, St. Mary's College, and the San Francisco Art Institute have registered their opposition.

Resistance isn't limited to private schools, which are clearly the most threatened. Two institutions within the California system, UCSB and UCLA, have voiced opposition—not to the goals of diversity as such, but to their imposition from outside.

But Thomas Woods's pessimism is easy to share: Both foresight and moral courage have been in short supply among college presidents and university chancellors. And right now the momentum is on the side of the diversity police. □

When a Rose Is Not a Rose

REIGN ON THE PARADE

K. L. BILLINGSLEY

FOR MOST of its 105-year history, the Rose Parade has been a truly multicultural event. There have been minority rose queens and grand marshals, along with floats from many countries. But this type of representation is not enough for some of the L.A.-area's PC swat teams, particularly the Pasadena battalion led by black City Councilman Isaac Richard and Mayor Rick Cole.

California's professional ethnics—such as developers Danny Bakewell of the Brotherhood Crusade and his comrade-in-anger Jimmy Morris—began accusing the Rose Parade of racism because its governing structure didn't have all the shades of color they demanded. Mayor Cole said the parade was "controlled by aging white men." The governing boards would have to be "diversified," went the refrain—by any means necessary.

The mayor was well equipped to serve as agitator-in-chief. Cole is an unreformed Sixties refugee who in 1970 headed a group of protestors disrupting a meeting of conservative school-board candidates by shouting and firing cap pistols. In 1992, when Rose Parade officials appointed a descendent of Columbus as grand marshal, Cole whined that Columbus was a symbol of "greed, slavery, rape, and genocide." Last year Cole showed up wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with "Tournament of Racism."

As for militant Pasadena Councilman Isaac Richard, he's fond of angry filibusters, during which he reads from *War and Peace*. He opposed having the council offer a reward for the capture of gang members who savagely gunned down three teenagers last October. When Cole pointed out in a televised council meeting that Richard himself had shot someone during the Seventies, the councilman flew into a rage and called Cole a "white, racist, poor, white-trash SOB."

Meanwhile, the reinforcements were arriving. Last September, Jesse Jackson hit town and led a vigil against the Rose Parade at All Saints Episcopal Church, itself a Cathedral of PC headed by the terminally trendy Reverend George Regas, Mayor Cole's Cardinal Richelieu. There were also vigils and protests outside of tournament headquarters.

The Los Angeles City Council joined the party by threatening to withdraw that city's floats from the parade if the Tournament of Roses did not add minorities and women to its executive committee. And black and Latino caucuses in the state legislature threatened to hold a public hearing.

As local Republican activist Andy Paterson put it, tournament officials "wore a tuxedo to an alley fight." So eager were they to appease that they brought in the NAACP and various Latino groups for consultation and commissioned a legal audit of the parade by former California Supreme Court Justice Cruz Reynoso, one of Rose Bird's closest allies. The audit found no "history of discrimination," but that did not deter the militants.

There was a break-in at tournament headquarters and two threatening phone calls: Change, or things could get rough, the callers said. So, on November 30, 1993, two days after the calls, tournament officals paid their protection money by appointing five quota members to the executive committee: one white female, an Asian female, two black males, and an Hispanic male. George Regas of All Saints, a condom evangelist who blesses same-sex unions, called it a "great victory."

What if parade officials had stood their ground? "We would have stopped the parade, interrupted it, and embarrassed them in the eyes of the world," said Danny Bakewell. "If they hadn't integrated the executive committee, there wouldn't have been no damn parade," said Isaac Richard.

Given the recent riots, things could have gotten ugly. Councilman Richard now is demanding that the Tournament pay the city $250,000 for, of all things, an anti-violence program. Mayor Cole and tournament officials are putting a happy face on everything. But having won by intimidation, the PC troops will be back. Some are already saying the quota appointments are only "a start."

On the bright side, this year's parade also offered evidence that Pasadena's mainstream residents are weary of ideological zealots. An airplane flew over the crowd with a banner that said, "Can't We Do Better than Rick and Isaac?" □

Mr. Billingsley is a media fellow of the Pacific Research Institute in San Francisco.

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The *Times*, It Is a Changin'

WHEN I first moved to Los Angeles 15 years ago I once ran into a psychiatrist who told me that the real purpose of the front page of the *Los Angeles Times* was to "make liberals feel good about themselves." I laughed, but then what did I know? I'd never read it.

Well, I have now. I even worked for the paper (for seven conflicted years). In those days people I met would often ask me what it was like. "It reminds me of working for an insurance company," I'd tell them. "You walk through the newsroom and there are all these bright depressed people staring at their terminals, sending insulting messages back and forth and worrying that [editor Shelby] Coffey is eavesdropping on their E-mail."

Reporters at the *Times* have good reason to be depressed. And I'm not talking about the continuing decline in advertising which recently led to staff reductions. The issue is journalistic integrity. During the chaos of the May 1992 King-verdict riots, the *Times*' resident cadre of activist journalists seized the moment to get a firm handhold on editorial policy. The result was schizophrenic riot coverage which alternated between solid reportage and infuriating special pleading on behalf of gang members who burn, loot, and murder. It was embarrassing, says one former staff writer. "The *Times* got branded as a knee-jerk paper that coddles gangs."

Last November the *Times*' credibility took another bath when, under pressure from these same activist staffers, the paper published a 19-page guideline on ethnic, racial, and sexual matters. Much to the chagrin of the people who drafted the guidelines, the whole thing blew up in their faces when newspapers all over the country erupted in guffaws over its proscription against allegedly offensive words like *brave*, *deaf*, *crazy*, *lame*, and *man-made*. Although the *Times* could point to valid reasons for at least some of the words on the list, taken together the whole process made it seem as if editorial policy was being made in thought-police central committee.

And yet, as deep in PC as the *Times* sometimes appeared to be, even a blind pig finds an acorn once in a while, and in late December, much to the surprise of people who maintained that the paper had long ago spiraled down the PC rathole, the *Times* found an acorn—it pulled up its pants, stuck a spear in the ground, and ran a long front-page story detailing President Clinton's extramarital love life when he was governor of Arkansas.

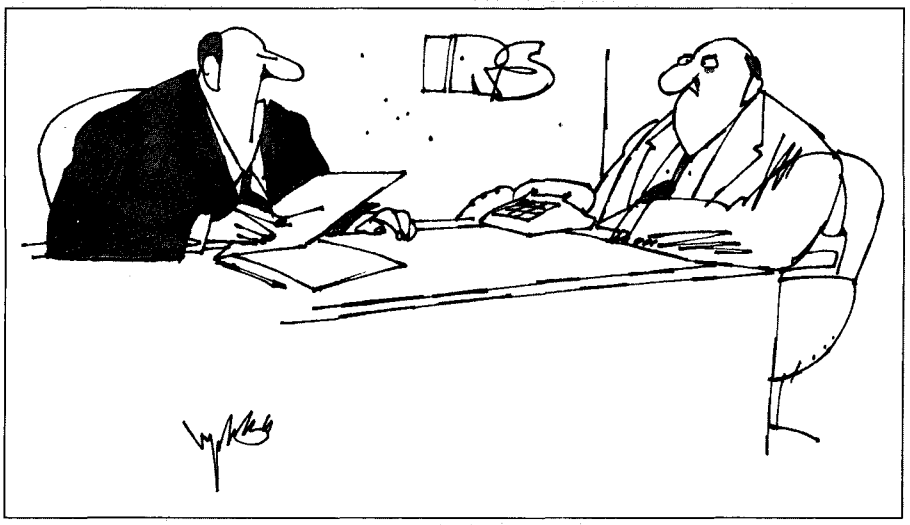
Clinton supporters in the media were aghast. It wasn't like the *Times* to be so critical of a Democratic President. When Clinton came to Times Mirror Square during the 1992 election campaign, the paper's newsroom was practically awash in ecstatic tears, so overcome were Clinton supporters by the high-intensity impact of his charismatic charm. After the election, some staffers went to work in the Clinton Administration and a far larger number would have liked to. Clinton was everything the *Los Angeles Times* had ever wanted in a sitting President (though they wished he would knock off these embarrassing references to God, faith, and the need for two-parent families).

In short, the *Times* was torn. According to managing editor George Cotliar, senior editors met for five or six days in a row hashing out the pros and cons, insisting on more proof, looking for places where they might get blindsided. At least one time they decided to kill it. Why was it resurrected? Maybe because of heavy pressure from a piece by *The American Spectator*, which noted that the *Times* had a story in the works, and which led to phone calls from eager readers, anxious to see it?

In trying to decide what to do, Cotliar says he personally read five or six memos, and twenty to thirty thousand words of ancillary material (a lot of it critical coverage of Hillary, which the editors decided not to run). In the end, his qualms notwithstanding, Shelby Coffey gave the go-ahead.

WAS his decision based on a simple straightforward desire to do good journalism? On fears that *Times* readers would scream "cover-up"? Or on a sense that the *Times* had conceded far too much to the Left in the last couple of years and if the paper was going to retain any integrity, now was the time to draw a line in the sand?

It's hard to know. I'm not even sure the *Times* knows. But I do know this: When the story broke, for the first time in a long time, I could read the front page of the *Times* and feel good about myself. —PAUL CIOTTI



"Do you have anything to say in your defense, or shall we just take you to the cleaners now?"

Mr. Ciotti is a freelance writer based in Los Angeles.

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powered, and lewdness made normal against the common sense of the country. Not even the most liberal politicians would have dared do this through legislation. It had to be done by the courts. The Supreme Court's claim to be the final arbiter of the propriety of everything that happens in this country is ridiculous. We should begin by clipping the Court's wings, as the Constitution explicitly allows. If we do that, there won't be any need for federal laws defining lewd, obscene, or disruptive activities. People can do that all by themselves

"Four out of five doctors agree: they should have gone to law school."

on the local level. The U.S. Government must "pull back": not because of any agnosticism about what is decent, but because the American people, as a whole, are much more decent than their government.

I do not mean to suggest that the diminution of government will cure all of America's ills. I propose however, that though not sufficient to their cure, the diminution of government is necessary.

None of the Above

IN RECENT YEARS, as both political parties have sided with the state against the people, voters have increasingly looked for ways of saying No to both. This is bad news for the Democratic Party, because it cannot hide that it is the party of the rulers, but those who live off government—perhaps 25 per cent—will never abandon it. The people's disaffection from government, however, is potentially fatal to the Republican Party. Unlike the Democrats, the Republicans have no financial grip on their voters. The Republican grip should be trust. The party that trusts the good judgment of Americans in matters that concern their own lives will prosper.

The disappearance of political parties is nothing new in our history. In the 1840s the Whig Party ceased to exist when many of its officeholders refused to take a stand on the dominant issue of the day: the extension of slavery. One Whig, Abraham Lincoln, led the remainder of his party into a new one—the Republicans. The dominant issue of our time is whether the state will grow or be cut back. Today as the Clinton Administration and a variety of interest groups together extend state control to everything from our doctors to our cars, while they force outrageous racial quotas and political correctness upon us, the American people have to tune in to Rush Limbaugh on AM radio to hear their pretentious masters dissected and ridiculed. Where are the Republican leaders? Most of them just plain see themselves as rulers—exactly like the Democrats. Those who believe in principles now feel like outsiders. No wonder the elephant is on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

Liberals and the American Idea

OUR UNDERLYING problem is that the American liberal elite no longer has any faith in the American idea. As much of the world is throwing off Communism and other forms of statism there is a lively debate among opinion leaders about whether any given country ought to follow the example of Singapore, Chile, Taiwan, or whatnot. Few, least of all U.S. officials, suggest that America is the model for mankind. And yet, ordinary people the world over choose to immigrate to the United States of America over anyplace else. To suggest that they come to get on welfare is an insult to them, and to America, as well as being false. This is the only country in the history of mankind where people of different nationalities can become, in Abraham Lincoln's words, "flesh of the flesh and blood of the blood" of the Founders.

By following the Founding Fathers' beliefs in the equality of men before our Creator and in small government, America produced freedom, harmony, prosperity, and generosity. No other set of ideas and practices has ever come close to doing as well. And yet since the 1930s America's elites have foisted upon us ideas and practices that would have revolted our Founders. Big government has been their tool. They have almost succeeded. If we are to restore the house of Washington and Lincoln, we are going to have to re-learn to apply their model, the American model, to our reforms.

The American model is based on the sober truth that government is not inherently the friend of ordinary people, and that it is invariably partial to the well-connected. Hence the American model calls for small government primarily for the sake of justice and honesty, and secondarily for the sake of efficiency. The biggest difference between the principle of government in America and anywhere else is that here the rulers must stick to clearly defined tasks, while ordinary people may do whatever they wish. We must make up our minds to put this principle into practice again, lest we lose the spirit that made us the envy of the world.

Most important, the American model is based on a certain kind of people—defined not by race but by virtue and by the willingness to take responsibility for our own lives. People fit to be Americans ask for blessings only from God. Because being Americans is not a matter of birth, we must practice it every day—lest we become something else. □

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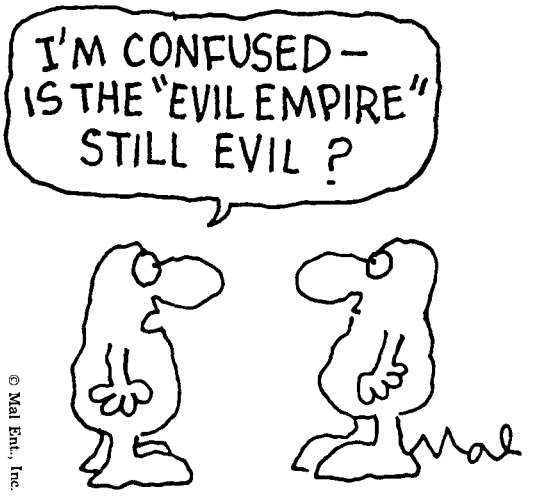
"You'll meet a svelte, leggy blonde or a tall, dark, handsome man, depending on your sexual preference!"



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Once More, with Feeling

In Germany, the troops depart;
  Far-flung, flotillas melt away
As once again Cassandras chart
  A loony's reminiscent bray,
While worried Czechs recall anew
When Neville wired, "Toodle-oo."

W. H. VON DREELE

"I'll have another flu shot."

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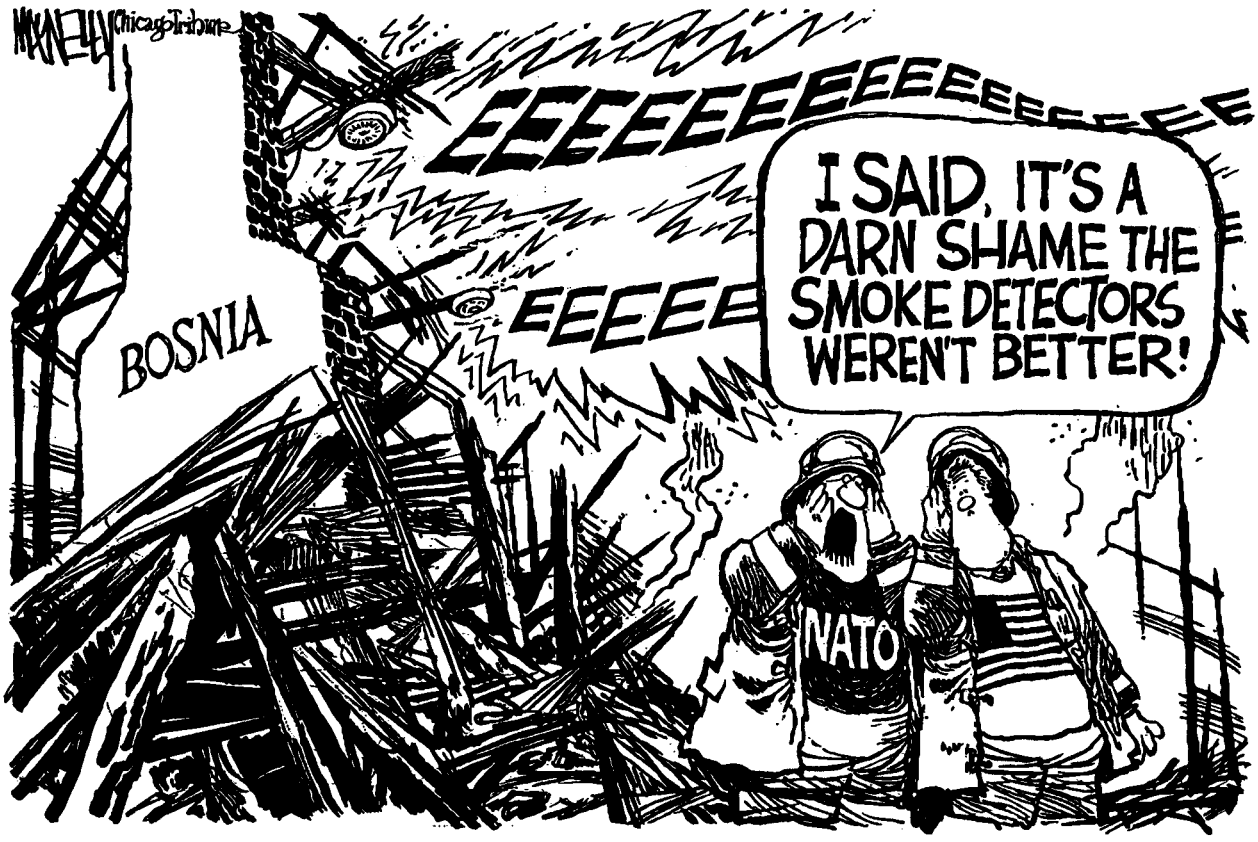

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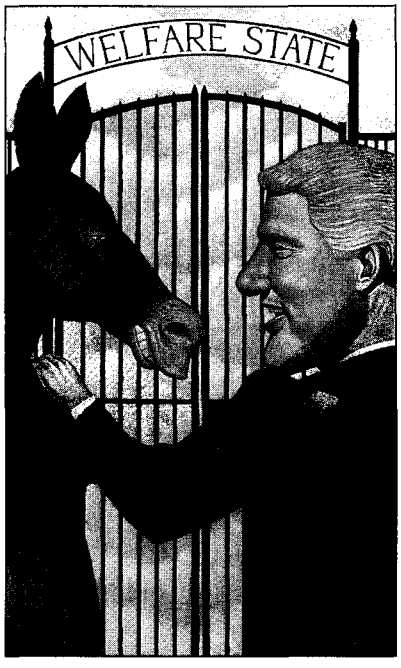

On the Reform Trail

WELFARE AS WE'LL KNOW IT

On welfare as on so many other issues, the Republicans have a golden opportunity—and seem instead to be offering 'the same but less.' What hope for true welfare reform?

TOM BETHELL

"Why are we so anxious to commit political suicide?"

—Rep. Jan Meyers (R., Kan.)

HAVING VOWED to end welfare as we know it, President Clinton is getting cold feet. "He's appointing people who have no interest in doing it," said Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, who told the *New York Post* that Clinton's campaign-trail manipulation of the issue had been "boob bait for Bubbas." Clinton told his first Cabinet meeting of the new year that he would probably delay action on welfare until health care passes Congress.

Welfare reform was popular with the voters, but it gives Clinton a political headache. The liberal wing of his own party is not interested in it at all. As many as 89 liberal Democrats in Congress would like to see welfare *expanded*. And the current beneficiaries of Democratic patronage are afraid of competition. "Public-employee unions, fearful that their members will lose jobs to welfare recipients who are forced off public assistance into community service work, are intensifying their pressure on the Clinton Administration to move slowly on welfare reform," the *Washington Post* reported in January.

Mr. Bethell, an NR *contributing editor, is Washington correspondent for* The American Spectator.

This tells us better than anything else where welfare reform is headed right now. The Democrats have wisely been holding back and letting the GOP show its hand. Sure enough, both House and Senate Republicans have come rushing forth with their very own "good government" proposals. The Senate version, promoted by Hank Brown of Colorado, would give welfare recipients the opportunity to exchange vouchers for a job that would pay them twice the combined value of their AFDC and Food Stamp benefits (which would greatly add to the incentive to get on welfare).

The centerpiece of the House proposal is, in the GOP's own language: "After receiving AFDC for two years, welfare recipients must work 35 hours per week in a private- or public-sector job." In short, the House Republicans are promising that if a private-sector job isn't available after two years on welfare, they will see to it that the public sector takes up the slack.

Working for welfare sounds reasonable at first, but upon examination it makes no sense. If people *can* work, they ought not to be on welfare. And if jobs must be provided for those who are on welfare in order to get them off, a government jobs program becomes inevitable. A lot of people on welfare will then be found incapable of working, so a training program will be added to the jobs program. The welfare system is converted into two years of government checks with a job entitlement at the end of it.

This is little more than a repeat of the failed "workfare" reform of 1988. Once enacted, it turned out to be a social worker's brier patch, into which the Democrats pretended they did not want to be thrown. The welfare rolls have increased sharply since it became law.

Representative Jan Meyers pointed to the many similarities between the new plan and the unsuccessful 1988 reform. "It hasn't worked," she said. "Less than 1 per cent of the welfare population is working today. And the program has cost us $10 billion more than expected—$13 billion instead of $3 billion." It was also predicted that the number of families on AFDC would not reach five million until late 1998. In fact, that milestone was reached in early 1993.

Too Hard to Explain

THE MAJOR defect of the Republican proposal is that it was worked out—primarily by GOP Conference Secretary Tom DeLay of Texas—in cooperation with Republican members of the House Ways and Means Committee who were at the time planning to run for statewide office. (These included Nancy Johnson of Connecticut, Fred Grandy of Iowa, and Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania.) Welfare reform is complex enough that

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it takes ten to fifteen minutes to explain. On the stump, simply saying, "By golly, we're going to make them work!" is more easily understood, and meets with instant applause. It isn't until the federal jobs program is enacted several years later that people begin to suspect that something has gone wrong.

Jan Meyers pointed out another defect of the GOP bill. It permits, but does not require, the states to deny AFDC to mothers where paternity has not been established. This seems reasonable, because most states would presumably not want to proclaim their indifference to an issue that is gaining in national attention. "Then I found out that the provision is retrospective," Mrs. Meyers said. Because the Republicans wanted to save money, the provision would affect not just those applying for welfare but those already on it. But those who have been on welfare for, say, ten years can reasonably argue that they don't know who or where the father of their child is. In trying to economize unwisely, then, the drafters have made the provision so draconian that it would probably cause most states to reject it.

Representative Meyers has herself introduced a welfare-reform bill which would freeze AFDC outlays at 1993 levels and return the money to the states in the form of block grants. States would be permitted to set their own rules, and all current federal rules and regulations would cease to apply. The use of federal funds to pay benefits would be prohibited when paternity has not been established or when either parent is under 18. When the House GOP caucus met in November, Mrs. Meyers recalls, about 80 (out of 176) showed up; about 40 voted for Tom DeLay's proposal, about 20 for Mrs. Meyers's, and about 20 seemed uncommitted or unsure. So the DeLay plan was adopted.

Why So Fast?

'WHY ARE we moving so quickly on welfare reform?" Mrs. Meyers asked fellow Republican congressmen in a "Dear Colleagues" open letter. "The rationale is that we must move quickly to 'position' the Republicans out in front of President Clinton. But in this instance, this is bad policy and bad politics. Is the goal to dramatize the difference between the parties, or to create a foundation upon which we can create a bipartisan bill? The Republican Welfare Task Force approach lays the groundwork for rolling the Republicans and handing the President this important legislative issue. Why are we so anxious to commit political suicide?"

The Republicans do not understand that they have already won by default on the crucial issue of welfare if the Democrats fail to achieve the radical overhaul that President Clinton seemed to promise. Leaks from the Administration's welfare task force make it clear that the Democrats too have in mind a disguised jobs program—a "warmed-over CETA," said welfare critic Charles Murray, referring to Jimmy Carter's employment and training act. So it must have been a great relief for them when they saw the Republicans entering the legislative arena with a modified version of their own proposal.

It's true that the Republicans also include some good things, such as cutting off welfare to illegal aliens and giving the states more discretion. But consider how this may play out if the 1988 scenario is followed. Democrats will label the Republican ideas as "right wing," "slavefare," and so on. But growing political pressure for something that can be called welfare reform could produce, late in the session, an ostensible Democratic conversion to "conservative" ideas.

With ostentatious reluctance, Democrats might well at that point embrace the Republican jobs program in exchange for the privilege of riddling it with even more loopholes. The word bipartisan would be much in the headlines, GOP stalwarts would surround Clinton and accept pens at the signing ceremony, and welfare would have been "reformed" (covertly expanded). The social workers' celebratory parties would be held offstage, and it would take two years for the news media (and the average voter) to figure out what happened.

It doesn't have to be that way, and it may not. "I think as time goes along the Republicans are going to re-examine this," said Mrs. Meyers.

"Right now the situation is fluid," said Charles Murray. But he is concerned about congressional mishaps. "You try to increase the incentive to get out of welfare, and you can inadvertently increase the incentive to get into it," he said. It happened before, "and, by God, if we're not careful we're going to do it again." The underlying problem, Murray added, is that "country-club Republicans don't want to be accused of being nasty." Liberals have accusation privileges, and Republicans know it. And fear it. □

HISTORY'S SOLUTIONS

MARVIN OLASKY

RECIPIENTS of relief "lose their energy and self-respect." Government aid creates "a dependent feeling, a dry rot." Many of the poor are "worse off than if they had never been helped."

Those comments could have been made at a recent conference on welfare, but they all come from the 1870s. Although Americans were not then hooked on the state, the expansion of government during and after the Civil War was ominous. In 1873 one of every ten people in Brooklyn took weekly rations from public storehouses. Other cities were not far behind.

Critics of governmental welfare realized they had to move quickly, before the new programs sank deep bureaucratic roots. Aided by journalists committed to reporting reality, the critics embarked on a program to educate the public about funds wasted through promiscuous distribution to alcoholics and addicts, and also publicized instances of "compassion" properly understood—suffering with and challenging those in distress.

Those efforts were successful. Reformers in large cities managed to abolish indiscriminate relief, and able-bodied men returned to the market-

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place; an abundance of warm-hearted but hard-headed charities dealt with special cases. Then as now, the thorniest issue was how to help children already or potentially on the streets, and their young unmarried mothers. The solutions these reforms came up with forestalled an epidemic of illegitimacy and saved thousands of children from misery.

Today, after thirty years of social "reform," the epidemic is upon us. Liberal scholars complain of the "feminization of poverty," but they do not acknowledge the triple-A causative factors: a decline in adoption, an increase in adultery, and an AFDC system that emphasizes the pseudo-independence of deeply dependent young women. Americans concerned about poverty a century ago not only saw cause and effect more clearly but also came up with programs that worked. They can work again, even in the face of a more extensive social breakdown.

Practical Compassion

THE nineteenth century's most effective helper of children on the streets was Charles Brace, a Yale graduate who settled in New York City and was at first shocked by "centers of crime and misery . . . where the little girls who flitted about with baskets and wrapped in old shawls became familiar with vice before they were out of childhood." Brace saw the need for political change, since high rents made necessary by high taxes forced families into small apartments: "A cheap and honest government . . . would at once lower taxation and bring down rents." But he also saw "how superficial and comparatively useless" was change that "does not touch habits of life and the inner forces which form character."

Brace first tried direct material distribution to those in evident need. But he soon learned that "if you put a comfortable coat on the first idle and ragged lad who applies," the next day fifty who are not in need will show up "to get jackets for nothing." Nor did Brace believe that massive shelters were helpful. "Asylum-life is not the best training for outcast children," he wrote. "The child, most of all, needs individual care and sympathy. In an Asylum, he is 'Letter B, of Class 3,' or 'No. 2, of Cell 426.' "

Part of Brace's solution was to set up six small lodging houses for abandoned children that would provide not only beds but classes in reading and industrial arts, along with Bible lessons. Instead of handing out aid that would soon be seen as an entitlement, Brace gave "rewards for good conduct, punctuality, and industry." Once they came to know the children, housekeepers could relieve cases of dire want with less likelihood of deception and without harm to the character-building process.

Newspapers praised Brace's lodging houses, and soon others were setting up similar institutions. But Brace saw the lodging houses as transitional devices designed to get children off the streets and begin the process of civilizing them. His real goal was to find adoptive homes in the countryside for city children, to get them under the combination of love and discipline that parents can provide. In the late 1870s Brace's New York Children's Aid Society placed close to four thousand children per year in farm families throughout the country.

Citizens' committees that took responsibility for the placing of children realized the dangers of abuse, so they turned down applicants with a reputation for mistreating help. Their main goal, though, was to place children quickly, so they were willing to take some calculated risks. The children also were no angels, and studies showed 1 to 5 per cent committing crimes in their new communities. But the studies also showed most placements working well. As one inspector reported, "Wherever we went we found the children . . . treated as well as any other children. Some whom we had seen once in the most extreme misery, we beheld sitting, clothed and clean . . . and gaining a good name for themselves."

The motivations of families that welcomed the children were of two kinds. Children aged seven to seventeen were expected to work part-time, so farmers had an economic incentive. Brace also stressed the theological incentive: "We cannot look upon this great multitude of unhappy, deserted, and degraded boys and girls without . . . bear[ing] in mind that One died for them, even as for the children of the rich and happy." When an "orphan train" was coming to town, ministers preached sermons challenging "those who practically believe in Christ's words and teachings to aid us in this effort." Had either motivation been missing, placement of older children would have been slow.

As it was, the work of Brace and others had a terrific anti-poverty effect. Hundreds of placed children became merchants, bankers, and businessmen. Thousands became successful farmers. At least three became governors. One college student wrote to Brace about how he had been "a vagrant, roaming over all parts of the city. I would often pick up a meal at the markets or at the docks, where they were unloading fruit. At a late hour in the night I would find a rest-

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ing place in some box." Then he was placed on a farm in Indiana, where "care was taken that I should be occupied." He was sent to school, given books to read in the evening, and eventually sent to Yale. "To be taken from the gutters of New York City and placed in a college," he wrote, "is almost a miracle."

Other children did not have such promising futures. One woman who had accepted a mentally deficient child wrote to Brace one year later, "I am often asked by my friends, who think the child is little more than half-witted, why I do not 'send her back—and get a better one.' My answer is, that she is just the one who needs the care."

Women and Poverty

AND WHAT of the children not abandoned, but born under harsh circumstances to young unmarried mothers? The numbers were not staggering as they are now, but the individual stories in the records of a typical charitable society a century ago were just as sad:

—"This girl met the alleged father of her child, a young man of 19, at the home of a friend. . . . She had intercourse with him [and] believed him when he promised to marry her if she became pregnant. Instead of doing this, he deserted her as soon as he learned of her condition."

—"This girl had known the father of her child, a young machinist of 25 . . . and had associated with him for three months before allowing him to be sexually intimate with her. . . . He deserted her when he learned of her condition."

—"She knew the father three years and had relations with him in the woods for a year and a half before the birth of her child. This girl said, 'When I was 13 there came to me an awful longing for someone to love me and kiss me at night. I thought it was a mother's love I wanted, but when this man talked to me I thought that was what I wanted.' "

It was understood then that containing poverty meant containing extramarital sex, so that there would be fewer children brought up by unmarried mothers. After the Civil War organizations such as the White Cross Society began calling on young men to "treat the law of purity as equally binding on men and women." Tens of thousands of women and men signed pledges promising chastity, and many abided by them.

Alongside the formation of pledge societies came the amplification of law, with the goal of protecting the young and preventing illegitimacy. By the 1920s almost all states specified an "age of consent" of 18 or at least 16; a man who had intercourse with a girl under that age could be charged with statutory rape. Nearly all states had statutes saying that a man who "obtained access" to a woman "of chaste character or repute" by promising to marry her, and who then failed to do so, could be imprisoned for one to ten years. Most states provided that if the accused married the woman before judgment was passed, legal action was ended; in some cases prosecution was merely suspended and could be revived if the husband deserted his wife within a specified time, usually three to five years.

What happened when, despite warnings and laws, illegitimate children were conceived? Some women had illegal abortions, but most carried their children to term.

The new single mother then had a vital decision to make: she could hold onto her baby and probably condemn both the child and herself to a life of material poverty and fatherless/husbandless deprivation, or she could place the baby for adoption. Crisis-pregnancy centers like the Heartsease Home in New York City recommended that children be "adopted into families where they will have the love and care to which they are entitled." The women who ran Heartsease, mothers themselves, understood the heartbreak that young mothers placing children for adoption would feel—but they emphasized the needs of the child.

When a young mother did decide to live as a single parent, they tried to make sure that she would live under the guidance of either her own mother or a matronly woman in charge of a group home. Churches and other anti-poverty organizations had job placement, training, and informal mentor programs for young women, but they never helped them to live alone.

The texture of life in group homes varied widely, but they shared an emphasis on honesty rather than on the promotion of unrealistic self-esteem. The decidedly non-euphemistic Erring Woman's Refuge was such a home in Chicago. Young mothers there did not head out on their own with their newborns; a woman who did not choose adoption was required to stay for at least one year. During that time she would learn the reality of caring for a baby—tears, bowel movements, and all—and see whether she could handle it. If not, she would have the opportunity to turn him over to parents who could, before the child became older and harder to place.

Crucially, this time would be spent in the safe environment of a group home, not in the dangerous terrain of a solitary apartment filled with the sounds of a crying child, where a tired mother might respond in anger.

Updating Old Lessons

WHAT relevance do these tales of old have for today? At a conference held recently at the Claremont Institute, talk of useful innovations flew through the air: Establish boarding schools to get kids off the streets. Encourage adoption. Promote abstinence among teenagers. Set up group homes for single mothers, with support payments going to the homes rather than to the individuals.

Many of these good new ideas for the 1990s were the common fare of the 1890s. We do not need tests of whether such approaches can work; we *know* that they can, because they did. But we do need to find ways to apply these old lessons in a new economic and moral context, if we are to reverse the decline of adoption, the rise in adultery, and the misdirection of AFDC.

Even social scientists on the Left have had to conclude that children do better physically and psychologically with a father and a mother, adoptive or biological, than with only a mother. But that realization has rarely been followed by public policies promoting adoption. Charles Brace took into account the economic motivations of farmers hoping to do well while they also did good; the economic motivation is gone today with mechanized farming; and poor urban families cannot afford to adopt children.

The historical application here is clear: give tax credits to fathers and mothers who adopt hard-to-place children. Savings in AFDC payments will more than pay for such a program. As

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economic barriers to adoption are lowered, bureaucratic and social barriers must also fall. Ministers who understand that God adopts us will have to preach this practical application. And, for older children who are not adopted, some of the billions of dollars now used to chain them to poverty can be used to build boarding schools that will provide fresh opportunities.

As to the increase in sexual activity outside of marriage, a century ago, moral concerns were sufficient to compel action, but we are now roped in by relativism, so the argument needs to be made in economic terms: The United States simply cannot afford an increase in illegitimacy. The War on Poverty was lost not only because of the inherent inefficiency of government programs, but because it coincided with a War on Sexual Restraint.

The best anti-poverty news of 1993 was the surge in abstinence programs such as True Love Waits, and the increasing seriousness with which even the public school establishment takes them. For poverty to decrease, chastity must become an honorable word once more, and statutory rape a feared charge.

Finally, it is now clear that AFDC must go—and the historical lesson is that it *can* go. Young mothers a century ago could not expect to live on their own with a governmental subsidy, and their children were better off because of that pressure. The numbers today make the task harder, but giving in is no solution.

The last defense of today's backers of AFDC is that cutbacks hurt innocent children. The historical lesson is that welfare sentimentality hurts them far more. □

Gun Control

WAIT A MINUTE

The Brady law probably won't reduce crime—but that doesn't mean it will be ineffectual.

JACOB SULLUM

ON APRIL 23, Colin Ferguson visited a Turner's Outdoorsman store in Signal Hill, California. He picked out a Ruger P-89 and completed a purchase form, presenting a California driver's license. He was told he could pick up the 9-mm pistol in 16 days, 15 required by the state and 1 added by the store. During that time the California Department of Justice checked state and federal data bases for a disqualifying criminal record. It also checked whether Ferguson had been involuntarily committed to a mental hospital in California. He cleared both hurdles and picked up his gun on May 9.

Seven months later, on the evening of December 7, Ferguson took a ride on the 5:33 train from Manhattan to Hicksville, Long Island. At about 6:10 P.M., as the train was approaching the Merillon Avenue station in Garden City, he drew his gun, stood up, and began firing. He shot 23 people, fatally wounding 6, before 3 passengers managed to subdue him.

The week before the shooting spree on the Long Island Rail Road, President Clinton had signed into law the Brady law, which requires a buyer to wait five working days before taking possession of a handgun. The waiting period expires in five years, by which time gun dealers are expected to have access to an instant background-check system.

California's waiting period is considerably stricter than the one established by the Brady law. It is three times as long, applies to shotguns and rifles as well as handguns, and covers a wider range of offenses. Moreover, California actually requires a completed background check, while the Brady law merely asks states to make a "reasonable effort to ascertain" whether the buyer is qualified.

Yet California's waiting period did not stop Colin Ferguson. To Glenn Links, co-owner of the store where Ferguson bought his gun, the lesson is obvious: "It proves that the waiting period is a joke, the Brady Bill is a joke," he told the *New York Times*.

The Real Agenda

A LOOK AT the track record of waiting periods shows that Links is essentially right: they are not effective at stopping criminals, whether lunatics like Ferguson or the garden-variety thugs who represent a greater everyday threat. Still, it is a mistake to dismiss the Brady law as a joke. Gun-control activists would not have invested so much time, energy, and money in getting it passed if they thought it would accomplish nothing. As the much-heralded "first step" on their agenda, the federal waiting period won't take a bite out of crime, but it will gnaw away at the right to keep and bear arms.

California, which has the nation's strictest waiting period, turns down about 1 per cent of the gun-purchase applications it receives each year. States whose laws more closely resemble the Brady law have even lower rejection rates. Indiana, for example, turned down about 0.06 per cent of applicants in 1990.

The federal waiting period looks even less promising as a means of actually thwarting crime, as opposed to generating rejection statistics. A background check can stop a crazy gunman only if he has already done something to distinguish himself. Unfortunately, mass murderers and assassins commonly stay out of both serious trouble and mental hospitals for many years before they commit the crimes that make them famous. And they often display a single-minded determination that would frustrate any "cooling-off" period. The list of criminals who were unfazed by waiting periods and background checks includes Patrick Edward Purdy, who killed five children at a Stockton, California, elementary school in 1989; James E. Pough, who killed eight people at a Jacksonville, Florida, loan office in 1990; and Gian Luigi Ferri, who killed eight people in

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a San Francisco office building last year.

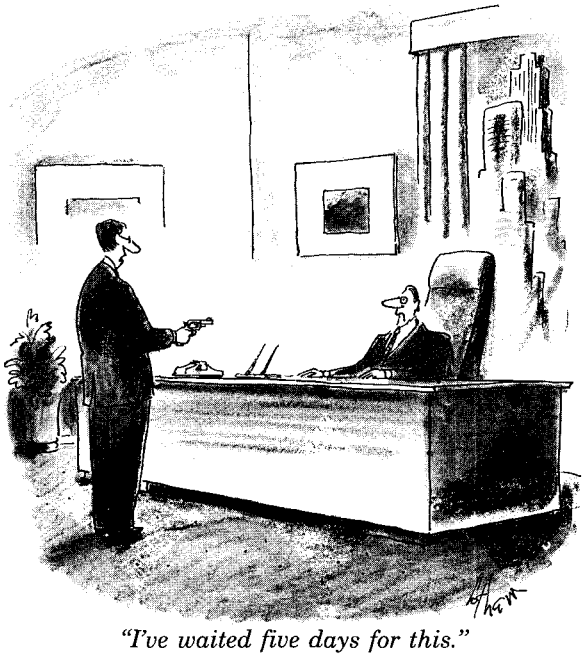
For supporters of the Brady law, John Hinckley's attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan in 1981 is the paradigmatic case. Sarah Brady, chairwoman of Handgun Control Inc., has repeatedly implied that a waiting period would have stopped Hinckley from shooting Reagan and her husband, Jim. "Had a waiting period been in effect seven years ago," she told *USA Today* in 1988, "John Hinckley would not have had the opportunity to buy the gun he used."

But gun-control scholar David B. Kopel, director of research at the Independence Institute, has shown there is very little basis for this claim. Hinckley had never been convicted of a felony, and he had no public record of mental illness. When he bought the .22-caliber revolver from a Dallas gun dealer, he presented a Texas driver's license, and it appears that he was indeed a resident of the state, as required by federal law. Since he committed his crime months after he purchased the gun, a "cooling-off" period would not have helped. Finally, had Hinckley been unable to buy the .22, he could have used one of the handguns he already owned. These included a legally purchased .38 special, which probably would have killed Reagan and Brady rather than injuring them.

Even when a gun buyer has been involuntarily committed to a mental institution, most police departments have no way of knowing. Data bases that track psychiatric evaluations are rare; in some states, they are illegal because of confidentiality laws. And while the Brady law provides money to establish a nationwide instant-check system for criminal records, it does not discuss collecting or upgrading mental-health records.

Such an effort would not have much of an impact in any case. California, one of the few states that looks at psychiatric records, rejected 333 gun buyers on mental-health grounds from January through October 1993. This group, which includes people considered mentally incompetent or a danger to themselves as well as people deemed a threat to others, represents about 6 per cent of denials during that period and less than 0.07 per cent of all applicants.

The vast majority of rejected gun buyers are people with criminal records. From January through October 1993, California turned down 5,316 buyers, of whom 84 per cent had committed disqualifying offenses, divided about evenly between felonies and misdemeanors. But it's not clear how many of these individuals, if any, were predatory criminals who planned to use the guns to rob or attack people. The group included, for example, 641 drug offenders and 118 people who had been convicted of forgery or fraud. The biggest category, assault, sounds menacing, but only 199 of the 2,400 buyers rejected for this crime had committed assaults serious enough to warrant felony convictions.



"I've waited five days for this."

Kopel argues that most of the thwarted buyers honestly believe they're qualified to own a gun. "They tend to be people who got into fights in bars 15 years ago but don't think of themselves as criminals," he says.

You also have to wonder how many habitual criminals are stupid enough to buy their guns over the counter in a state known for its strict waiting period and background check, when they have a number of alternatives: they can ask (or pay) someone without a criminal record to buy a gun for them, they can steal a gun, they can borrow one, or they can buy one in the grey or black market. In their 1986 book *Armed and Considered Dangerous: A Survey of Felons and Their Firearms*, sociologists James D. Wright and Peter H. Rossi report that only 12 per cent of the prisoners they interviewed said that the last handgun they had obtained "to use in a crime" came from a gun store. A quarter of these criminals stole the gun, leaving 9 per cent who bought them—and in many of these cases the purchases "would have been made in the felon's behalf by friends or associates with 'clean' records." So well over 90 per cent of criminals would not have been inconvenienced by a waiting period.

Thus, it would be surprising if waiting periods had a significant impact on crime. The most comprehensive study of the issue was done by Florida State University criminologist Gary Kleck, who reports the results in his 1991 book *Point Blank: Guns and Violence in America*. Using sophisticated statistical models, Kleck analyzed the impact of 19 different kinds of gun control in all U.S. cities that had populations of more than 100,000 in 1980. Looking at crime data for 1979–81, he found that waiting periods had no statistically significant effect on homicides, assaults, robberies, rapes, or suicides.

Who Will Be Disarmed?

THAT DOES NOT mean the Brady law will never prevent a crime. But because the benefits are likely to be very small, we should be especially sensitive to the costs. For instance, law-abiding citizens sometimes need a gun in a hurry. During the 1992 L.A. riots, it quickly became apparent that residents could not rely on the police for protection. But if they sought to arm themselves, they were out of luck: when the riots were over, there were still 11 days to go in California's waiting period. On a smaller scale, for people threatened by stalkers, violent ex-boyfriends, serial rapists, or armed burglars, even a few days may be too long. The net effect of the federal waiting period could well be more rather than fewer deaths.

However the utilitarian calculus plays out—and we probably will never know for sure—the federal waiting period will certainly help to delegitimize the right to keep and bear arms. It

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makes gun ownership seem less like a right and more like a privilege, which paves the way for harsher gun-control measures. The ostensible aim of Handgun Control Inc. is to keep pistols "out of the wrong hands." But the definition of "wrong hands" is apt to expand. In 1976, HCI founder Pete Shields said in *The New Yorker*: "The first problem is to slow down the number of handguns being produced and sold in this country. The second problem is to get handguns registered. The final problem is to make possession of all handguns and handgun ammunition—except for the military, police, licensed security guards, licensed sporting clubs, and licensed gun collectors—totally illegal." After Colin Ferguson's rampage, HCI President Richard Aborn told the *New York Times* that his organization "always said the Brady Bill was a first step." We can't say they didn't warn us. □

Europe and America

A QUESTION OF CLASS

Do we really want to restore upward mobility? Then forget about 'equal opportunity.'

CLAES G. RYN

EUROPE and the United States are said to be different in that the latter is not a class society. The United States, we are told, was founded on the idea of equality. Yet egalitarianism had little or nothing to do with shaping early American society. Leading Americans assumed the desirability of elites, in and outside of government. In the words of the Federalist Papers, an elite of representatives should "refine and enlarge the public views." Even Thomas Jefferson, who did have egalitarian leanings, believed in a "natural aristocracy." What John Lukacs calls "the American gentleman" has played a central role in American society up to this century. Those today who claim that "equality" was always of the essence of America draw very selectively from the historical record.

Indeed, all societies are and must be class societies. Societies that are built in the name of equality tend to become the most rigidly stratified of all. The real question is not whether society will have classes, but what *kind* of classes they are to be.

America is said to offer greater "equality of opportunity" and social mobility than Europe and to have greater cultural and economic vitality as a result. No snotty upper class can hold back productive and creative individuals. A problem with this view is that, without social discrimination of some kind, equal opportunity means putting the commercial sleaze-bag on par with the honest businessman, the demagogue on par with the responsible leader, the pornographer on par with the artist, and the intellectual huckster on par with the learned scholar. If "equal opportunity" signifies a wholly "level" playing field, it is just another term for the absence of civilized preferences.

Civilization defines itself by its discriminations. It cherishes certain ways of behaving and detests others. A message goes out to the pornographer: "Your kind is not welcome here. We may put up with you, within limits, but expect no invitation to our party." Without premiums and penalties—without social structures that reflect a scale of values—laziness, greed, and pandering tend to overwhelm high standards. In a majoritarian mass democracy, civilization is in a fight for its life.

Again, a classless society cannot exist, but a perverted class society certainly can: one in which people of distinction are lorded over by their inferiors. Both Europe and America have moved far in that direction. How telling, for example, that many American professors should take their cue from op-ed pieces in the *New York Times* or talking heads on television. The role of a real professor would be to tell the snappy writers and talkers not to be so glib. (It might be objected that, given the quality of today's faculties, professors can't rank above pundits. But what does *that* tell us about social and cultural inversion?)

European elites today are technocratic rather than cultured, trained rather than educated, ideological rather than intellectual, and rootless and superficial rather than cosmopolitan. Still, Europe may not have received proper credit for what its old class societies contributed and are still contributing to the defense of humane values. Because of the American cult of equal opportunity, it may seem ornery to be willing to grant any such credit. But, considering the nature of today's elites, it may be permissible to reflect upon the civilizing aspects of the older European class systems—not to set them up as models, necessarily, but to consider how civilized standards might be re-created and protected in new circumstances.

The Swedish Example

THE EUROPEAN country best known to this writer is Sweden, where I was born and raised. Sweden attracted much attention in the last several decades because of its elaborate welfare state, but both its admirers and its critics understood it poorly. Now that Sweden has serious problems, conservatives say: We told you so; the welfare state must self-destruct. This view may not be wrong exactly, but it misses an important lesson of the Swedish case.

How could Sweden make a go of it for so long? How could a country of about seven million people in the 1950s be so competitive that, for a while, its standard of living surpassed that of all other countries, including the United States? Most Americans would be surprised to learn that even in the heyday of the Swedish welfare state, the Swedish economy was less socialized, in the ordinary sense, than

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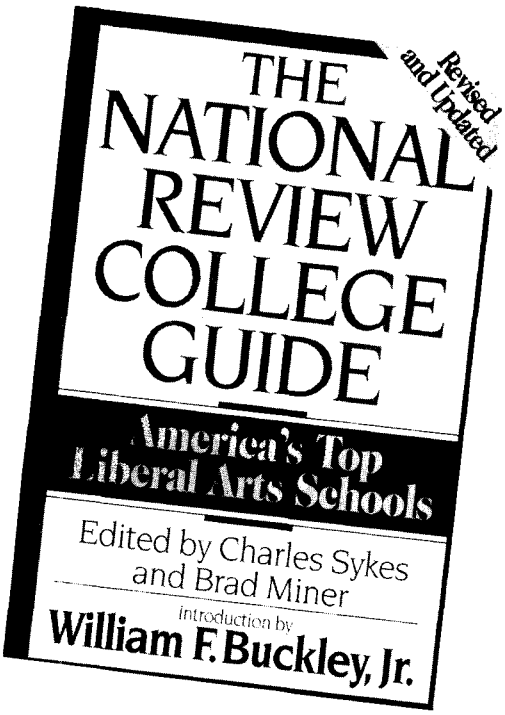

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that of any other European country. The Social Democrats had socialized, not the *means* of production, but the *fruits* of production. They taxed very heavily. But all of the well-known companies—Volvo, SAAB, Ericsson, Electrolux, etc.—were and are privately owned and operated. The Swedish government milked an economy that remained relatively free, although increasingly burdened by regulations and social fees.

But there is a more important reason why little Sweden was competitive for so long. It could live off capital—moral, intellectual, and aesthetic, as well as economic—that had been accumulated before the great expansion of the welfare state. It could draw upon the legacy of—a class society. Only slowly did the egalitarian reforms in education and elsewhere work their way through social and cultural structures that had buttressed rather high standards. It was when the depletion of the cultural capital aggravated the depletion of the economic capital that problems became acute.

As late as the 1950s and '60s, the older social structures remained, in weakened form. Sweden still had an "elitist" educational system, although education had long been free at all levels and open to whoever measured up to its standards. Education was quite rigorous at all levels. Though far from flawless, the curriculum below the university had substantial literary, classical, and historical elements as well as strong mathematical and scientific components. It was taken for granted that persons aspiring to positions of responsibility had to learn at least a couple of the big languages. National pride was fostered, but so was a cosmopolitan outlook.

Even as the Social Democrats pressed on to complete the egalitarian transformation of Sweden, many influential people were still inclined to take their bearings from persons of high achievement. Elites were connected across professional lines. Leading physicians, lawyers, diplomats, military officers, journalists, and others with social status were examples to others, not just as professionals but as cultivated, well-mannered persons. They could be expected to read seriously and to go with their families to concerts, art museums, and the theater.

Nor would the businessman be simply a money-maker. There comes to mind one successful businessman in a good-sized city. He seemed to spend every free moment at home in his library. He would read and read: works of fiction, history, literary criticism, and philosophy. In the newspapers this businessman turned first to the

so-called "cultural articles," essays on literature, the arts, or politics. The sports pages were not written with people like him in mind. He never noticed the comics. It was no coincidence that this same man routinely made business decisions that he knew might reduce profits but that he considered only proper for any self-respecting firm. Although perhaps an outstanding example of his type, he was by no means an oddity. One of his friends, the president of a department store, wrote literary reviews for one of the local newspapers.

Every level of society had its own elites. One of the effects of these social hierarchies was to protect non-utilitarian, non-mercenary goals and to create disdain for people who would sacrifice civilized values for an obsessive pursuit of ambition or profit. You entered elites by measuring up—and not just in a narrowly professional way.

Because of its human capital, Sweden could more than hold its own internationally. Considering its small population, its achievements in basic science, medicine, pharmacology, high technology, engineering, economics, business, literature, and the arts were remarkable. A particular kind of class society made them possible.

But did not the United States have similar social and cultural structures? It did indeed. It had those "American gentlemen," for instance, and it had quasi-aristocratic structures that reflected and supported some very high standards in science, business, scholarship, and the arts. This legacy remains discernible behind much that is still outstanding in American life. But whereas in Sweden it took concerted, protracted, government pressures to subvert the older hierarchy of values, in America, a transformation that is in some ways more radical has taken place without the same amount of social engineering. Cultural devolution having started, so-called "equal opportunity" greased the hinges for the opening of the social floodgates. Serious art was more quickly overwhelmed by floods of entertainment and sports, political integrity by mass demagoguery, and wisdom by the yak-yak of the talking heads and op-ed writers. The market is now channeling riches beyond the dreams of avarice to entertainers of unexampled vulgarity and offensiveness, to lawyers who shamelessly exploit a labyrinthine legal system, and to many others who, in a more discriminating society, would be treated as pariahs.

Measuring Down

THE MAGNITUDE of this social and cultural inversion is obvious when a President of the United States can speak the name of "Magic" Johnson, not to scold, but to appoint the person to a government commission. Some time ago a former Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, no less, who later became U.S. Secretary of Education, no less, revealed his great and abiding fondness for rock music. Rock music!

A poignant illustration of the scope of this social and cultural transformation is the evolution of an American movement that might have been expected to resist much of the change. In the decade after World War II leaders of resurgent intellectual conservatism shared the aristocratic leanings of the Framers of the Constitution. They also stressed the primacy of moral, aesthetic, and philosophical efforts in attempting to reorient society. But intellectual conservatism never developed

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the mature and wide-ranging philosophical culture that might have more deeply influenced society. Instead, in the last few decades it reordered its priorities and adopted corresponding new social rankings.

Thinking now that practical politics sets the direction of society, conservative intellectuals turned increasingly to political journalism and politicking. They started bowing before media celebrities, as if appearances in the *Wall Street Journal* or on television conferred moral and philosophical authority. On occasion, intellectual conservatives still look to the world of ideas, but their preoccupation with politics and lack of philosophical ear make them most easily impressed by academics with a propaganda claque or connections in Washington and the media. The old emphasis on ethics and culture and the old aristocratic predilections seem to be fading away. In fact, it is now the trademark of many who call themselves conservatives to promote "equality of opportunity" and "democracy"!

Looking back on the social and cultural transformation of the United States, would the country not have been better served by elites that were not only more discriminating but more inflexible and robust? It is time to stop using the term equal opportunity. The same for "level playing field," "equality at the starting line," and the like. Today especially, these terms just facilitate the ascension of unworthy elites. What is needed is more *un*equal opportunity, more discrimination, in favor of an endangered species: civilized man.

Would that it were still possible to have elites with some class—and some clout. □

The Clinton Plan—and Others

THE WELFARIZATION OF HEALTH CARE

The Clintons want to use health care to expand government. This time, the GOP is ready for them.

DICK ARMEY & NEWT GINGRICH

AMERICANS have three major concerns about health care: 1) gaining portability, or the ability to retain one's insurance upon changing jobs, 2) controlling the rising costs that have consistently outstripped inflation over the past decade, and 3) expanding access to the much-discussed 37 million uninsured.

Unfortunately, the Clinton Administration got sidetracked while crafting its health-care package. Rather than using what's right with American health care to fix what's wrong with American health care (to paraphrase President Clinton's inaugural address), the Clinton team opted for a grand experiment that threatens the quality of care for every American.

President Clinton's Health Security Act casts the entangling net of the welfare state ever wider, hauling America's great middle class into dependency. All Americans will have to rely on the government for health care, and the government will tell them what they can get, where they can get it, whom they can get it from, and how much they can spend for it. If you like the way the Federal Government runs public housing and the state government runs the Department of Motor Vehicles, you'll love health care under the Clinton Plan.

The Health Security Act would create 105 new bureaucracies, expand 47 others, make major changes in the tax laws, and promulgate more than 100 new federal regulations. The bill's 1,364 pages are teeming with new quasi-governmental agencies, all overseen by a seven-member National Health Board whose decisions would not be subject to judicial review. (It is vintage Bill Clinton that at the same time he is proposing the biggest new entitlement program in half a century, he is advocating the creation of a commission to recommend how to reduce federal entitlement spending.)

This plan is being sold with the slogan, "Health care that's always there." It would more aptly be called, "Government that's always there." The Clinton plan would include an individual health-security ID card that feeds personal medical information into centralized government data banks; allotments for the number of medical students who may specialize in any given field; regional alliances carved with the precision of gerrymandered congressional districts; and a global budget capping how much can be spent on health care per year.

Government Everywhere

TWO QUOTES reveal the very essence of the Clinton plan. The first came on September 22, the evening President Clinton unveiled his reform to a joint session of Congress. CBS News anchor Dan Rather lobbed a few softballs the First Lady's way in an exclusive interview. In explaining why the President's government-run approach is better than market-based Republican approaches, Mrs. Clinton noted, "If individuals were required on their own, we wouldn't know quite how to keep track of all of them. . . . The real bottom line is we want everybody in the system, we want everybody insured, and we want to spread that burden fairly so that every person has responsibility for their health care."

"The system"! Without the Clinton plan there is no "system," just millions of people, many of whom never got a law degree (let alone a Rhodes Scholarship), making decisions as to what is best for themselves and their families. This simply cannot go on.

The second quote comes from the original draft plan sent to Capitol Hill: "A single benefit package that covers every eligible American eliminates

Mr. Armey is a former economics professor from Texas. Mr. Gingrich is a former history professor from Georgia.

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confusion over coverage." That's right—government must decide for the befuddled masses. What ultimately will bring about the demise of the Clinton health-care plan is the utter arrogance that permeates the thing.

A close reading of the bill suggests it has as much to do with enacting unpopular liberal social policies through the back door as it does with providing health care to all Americans. The New Testament sets forth how people should live in about 180,000 words. The health-care bill does it in 260,000. It is a breathtaking display of social engineering, the scope of which has not been seen since the Great Society in the Sixties.

—The Clinton plan is a Trojan horse for federally funded abortion, which was rejected by this Congress as recently as June. At the same time, the bill denies funds for extended treatment of congenital conditions such as cystic fibrosis, cerebral palsy, and spina bifida.

—Robert Reich told the House Energy and Commerce Committee (October 28, 1993) that the new federal entitlement for early retirees would induce early retirement, "opening up all kinds of job opportunities for younger people."

—Rural and suburban areas will be lumped into regional alliances with inner cities so that billions of dollars can be siphoned into urban hospitals for treatment of drug addiction, gunshot wounds, and AIDS.

—Productive, innovative, entrepreneurial small businesses will subsidize aging dinosaurs and their union work forces, in essence buying out bad labor–management contracts to the tune of about $14 billion per year, according to the Heritage Foundation.

—A Graduate Medical Education Board will allocate the number of students per year who can specialize in cardiology, orthopedic surgery, gynecology, etc., basing its decisions on the "national need for new physicians in specific specialties." This, along with "physician retraining programs," is designed to increase the percentage of primary-care physicians from the current level of 40 per cent to the Administration's preferred 55 per cent, thus overruling patient demand.

Such grandiose social schemes cost money, of course, and the Clinton plan is good old-fashioned income redistribution ("We want to spread that burden fairly"). At least 40 per cent will pay more, according to HHS Secretary Donna Shalala, which means it's probably more like 60 per cent.

Feeling Secure?

AS IS OFTEN the case with government expansion, the Clinton plan is being sold in the name of "security." The Administration tested focus groups, and wrapped its plan in the word that garnered the warmest response. The promise of security is false, however.

The employer mandate on which the plan's financing rests will result in the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs, mostly in industries with a high percentage of low-wage and part-time employment (which disproportionately hire women and minorities). It's hard to feel secure without a job, but the President's rhetoric ignores this basic fact of life.

Global budgets and other limits on health-care spending, including a government mandate that real per-capita health-care spending be held constant after 1998, will result in diminished returns on research and development. It's hard to feel secure when a possible cure for your daughter's life-threatening ailment stays on the drawing board because of limited funds.

As Harry and Louise (the couple at the kitchen table in the television ad that so infuriates the First Lady) ask: "What happens when our plan runs out of money?" Judging from the experience of two programs that rely on federally prescribed funding levels—the Indian Health Service and the Veterans Administration health-care system—patients will wait in line for services. According to one doctor who worked in VA hospitals, Myra Kleinpeter, when the money Congress had appropriated ran short, elective surgery, including open-heart surgery, had to be delayed.

Most Americans feel secure with their current doctors, but the Clinton plan would limit a family's ability to retain them. When the fee-for-service plans fill up, patients will be allocated to plans via "random selection." Can there be security in "random selection"?

And anyone who tries to circumvent this bureaucratic nightmare—say, by buying a doctor a case of wine for Christmas in exchange for a little fee-for-service—can be barred by the Secretary of HHS from "participation in any applicable health plan." Anyone convicted of "health-care-related crimes or patient abuse" would be subject to "a minimum period of exclusion . . . not less than five years" (p. 940 of the Health Security Act). Are you feeling more secure yet?

The 'Which Doctor' Bill

THE Administration's early polling data also turned up public concern about "choice," and so every Clinton (Hillary or Bill) speech on health care asserts that their plan assures choice.

One of us asked the First Lady at a hearing, "Let's imagine a typical American family. The husband has an

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internist he likes. The wife has her gynecologist, with whom she is confident and comfortable. Their children have a pediatrician they like. Is there any chance under your plan that this family would have to go to doctors other than the doctors they've known and relied on for years?"

The First Lady conceded that "I can't say that in every instance, in every family that it would not happen" that a family would have to go to other doctors. The Clinton plan is the "which doctor" bill, because after it passes you will be forced to choose which doctors to keep and which ones to drop.

History Does Teach

THE Federal Government imposed price controls on gasoline in the 1970s, and the result was rationing. Drivers waited in lines for hours on "odd/even" days. Health care is subject to the same laws of supply and demand.

In the same way Jimmy Carter misdiagnosed the "energy crisis" of the 1970s, Bill Clinton has misdiagnosed the "health-care crisis" of the 1990s. As Daniel Casse of the Project for the Republican Future noted in a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, both Carter and Clinton responded with bureaucratic solutions—Carter creating the Department of Energy, Clinton the National Health Board and its teeming offspring—and fit black hats on any who opposed their plans, calling them "naysayers," "profiteers," and "friends of the status quo."

History may not always repeat itself, but Democrats never seem to change their focus from finding new reasons and innovative ways to bring big government further into the lives of the American people. Whether it be the energy "crisis," the environmental "crisis," the homelessness "crisis," the day-care "crisis," or now, the health-care "crisis," their game plan is fairly constant. By studying history, Republicans can learn from previous mistakes and previous successes.

After defeating President Carter's energy policy, Republicans enacted market-oriented reforms that ended the gasoline lines. Deregulation led, as it inevitably does, to lower prices. By defeating the Clinton plan, Republicans can refocus health-care policy on portability, cost control, and increased access, and we can do it with market-oriented reform.

President Clinton said in November on *Meet the Press*, "We're the only people who have a plan." Of course, that's not the truth. Quite the contrary. There's the Chafee bill, the Gramm bill, the McDermott single-payer bill, the Cooper managed-competition bill, the Stearns–Nickles plan, and the bill with the largest number of co-sponsors of all, the Affordable Health Care Now Act, HR-3080, introduced (more than a month before the Clinton plan was brought to the Hill) by House Republican Leader Bob Michel (R., Ill.) and Senate Republican Conference Secretary Trent Lott (R., Miss.).

The Michel–Lott bill provides a common-sense approach to the three problems that most concern Americans about their health care, without losing sight of the fact that 85 per cent of the people have health insurance and 85 per cent of them are happy with their own health care.

The GOP bill, shepherded through the House Republican Conference by former high-school wrestling coach Dennis Hastert (R., Ill.) and crafted largely by Tom Bliley (R., Va.), Nancy Johnson (R., Conn.), and Marge Roukema (R., N.J.), begins by looking at the nature of the uninsured.

The figure of 37 million uninsured is the Democrats' rhetorical leverage. But the population of uninsured is constantly in flux; according to a 1990 Urban Institute study more than half of those 37 million will be insured in less than four months, and nearly three-fourths will be insured in less than a year. Other estimates have put the number of the "chronically and involuntarily" uninsured at between 10 and 15 million people, or about 6 per cent of the population.

Instead of compelling all Americans to change health-care practices that the vast majority find satisfactory for the benefit of 6 per cent of the population, the Michel–Lott bill focuses on expanding access through direct subsidy and market reforms.

It would guarantee continued access to coverage for employees changing jobs. It would establish Medical Savings Accounts so families could save thousands of dollars per year tax-free, and roll the account over year after year to build. As long as the funds were used for health care, they would

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remain tax free; otherwise withdrawals would be treated as taxable income and subject to a 10 per cent penalty. The bill also changes the tax code to treat long-term-care insurance the same as other health-insurance plans, thus making it easier for older Americans to obtain coverage.

The Michel–Lott bill addresses the underlying causes of rising costs in health care, as opposed to artificially imposing government price controls. Physicians pay nearly $6 billion annually in liability premiums, according to the AMA, and defensive medicine costs the nation between $7 and $12 billion per year. Our Republican bill deals with both these problems by limiting frivolous lawsuits with serious malpractice reforms.

Our bill would cost about $20 billion over five years, most of it to pay for subsidies to families below the poverty line who still do not qualify for Medicaid, for more community health centers targeted for poor women and children, for emergency services for rural communities, and for 100 per cent health-insurance deductibility for the self-employed (up from 25 per cent). All of it is on the books and paid for, while Clinton's funding is dubious at best, and he seeks to keep the employer/employee payroll taxes—a/k/a the "premiums"—off budget.

According to a new analysis by Morgan Reynolds and Lawrence Hunter, Republican staff economists at the Joint Economic Committee, the shortfall between promised benefits and anticipated revenue in the Clinton plan will be about $425 billion in the year 2000, and will accumulate to more than $1 trillion in the first eight years of implementation.

If the Clinton plan becomes law, therefore, Congress will face some unsavory policy options in the year 2000, specifically: 1) increasing the annual budget deficit by about $425 billion, or 2) raising taxes by the same amount (about $3,500 per household), or 3) diminishing health care by $425 billion (probably through price controls that would result in rationing, as has been the case in other countries), or 4) some combination of the three.

Rarely have Americans been presented with a more stark contrast in policy approaches. The Clinton path leads to a complete government takeover of 14 per cent of the U.S. economy. It's a top-down, welfare-state approach that diminishes personal freedom, choice, and quality and would convert a vibrant, innovative industry into a drab, lethargic bureaucracy.

The Republican approach uses what's right with America to fix what's wrong with America, vesting individuals with greater discretion and cutting back on the regulation and litigation that are causing most of the problems Americans face in health care today. □

On Sesame Street

CHILDREN'S LIT-CRIT

Who knows what dangers lurk for our children's self-esteem in the most innocent-looking media?

RUTH ANN BAKER

TWO concerned mothers recently wrote a letter to one of America's largest newspapers, objecting to a potentially harmful flaw in *Sesame Street*: there aren't enough female Muppet characters.

Certainly, the show's adult human characters achieve a remarkable balance—a Hispanic male, a Hispanic female, a black male, a black female, a white male, and a deaf white female. A few teenagers of various ethnic backgrounds further the rainbow scheme. But come to the puppet level and the Technicolor bubble bursts.

To be sure, their fuzzy coats come in both primary and secondary colors; and the two best known, Bert and Ernie, have been sharing a bedroom for years, thereby striking a blow for the alternative-lifestyle agenda. But at the time the two mothers wrote their letter, every one of the major characters was unmistakably male. Big Bird, Grover, Bert, Ernie, Cookie Monster, Telly Monster, and Oscar the Grouch: read it, women, and weep. The only female characters were minor ones, such as Prairie Dawn and Baby Alice Snuffleupagus. This sent a dangerous signal to impressionable little girls. It told them that they might not grow up to be Muppets. "All these little girls need to have role models on the show," Valeriana Lovelace, a psychologist who directs *Sesame Street* research, told the *New York Times*. ". . . It's important to legitimize the experiences of little girls."

So now they have an orange, wide-mouthed, loud-voiced female named Zoe, who "when corrected [will] laugh and be positive about it." (The positive acceptance of criticism is how you can tell she's not Murphy Brown.) Good luck, guys: in the show's 25-year history, no female Muppet has ever been as popular as the males; surveys shows that viewers don't even remember the females' names.

You have to give *Sesame Street* credit, though, for being progressive on so many fronts. There's an oft-repeated story about recycling in which one family saves a mayonnaise jar to use for tadpoles and another makes it into a coin bank. But the third alternative—and the narrator's "favorite"—is returning the jar to a recycling factory where it is melted down in a fiery furnace and formed into a new glass jar. Clearly a superior use of our precious fossil fuels. And since the 1992 political season, there has been an unusually high repetition rate for a song listing all possible reconfigurations of the family unit, with a little girl (sadly, not a female Muppet) warbling, "As far as I can see, we're a family." Take that, Republican scoundrels!

Danger Everywhere

IN ANY case, the concerned mothers' essay opened my eyes to the true danger. And once you start looking, you find it everywhere.

Mrs. Baker is a radio talk-show host on WTAE-AM in Pittsburgh.

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What about the popular *Shining Time Station*, also on public television, where all the good characters are devoted to preserving an anachronistic railroad depot and its antiquated engines? The show's villain, Schemer, is a villain precisely because he keeps coming up with trendy ideas for renovating and profiting from the decrepit station. Sure, the oily Schemer sends the important message that money-making businesses are evil, but the heroes' desire to cling to the station's past runs afoul of one of my local school district's new, state-mandated beliefs: "Change is essential for progress." This televised reverence for tradition is going to screw our kids up.

Television isn't the only culprit. Remember the delightful *Curious George* book series? The eponymous first volume features rabid speciesism, as "the man in the large yellow hat" poaches George from his native African jungle; sizism, as the narrative needlessly describes two monkey-punishing firemen as "fat" and "thin"; and, in one sentence, both linguistic insensitivity and speciesism, as George's new home is called a "zoo," rather than an "international wildlife conservation park," and as the human imperialist in the large yellow hat actually believes George will be happy there.

A young boy might deduce from *Tommy Visits the Doctor* that male doctors watch patiently as children strip to their underwear, then take all their measurements and administer shots, while female nurses are competent only to answer the door and hand out lollipops. Obviously, the book's authors haven't actually visited a doctor's office in the past twenty years, or they'd know that women perform most of the non-diagnostic chores. Soon, though, even this unpleasant distribution of labor will run smack-dab into the iron curtain of Hillary Clinton's health-care reform. And no version of socialized medicine as yet covers lollipops.

Disney feature-length cartoons overflow with examples of Eurocentrism. Any number of doctoral theses could explore the Messianic symbolism in *Pinocchio* and *The Little Mermaid*, but some messages are overt, as when the villain in *Pinocchio* reinforces suspect Western religious values by commanding his henchman to round up for Pleasure Island some "stupid little boys . . . you know, the disobedient ones." No consideration is given to the possibility that those little boys are exploring alternative value systems. And where is equal time for stupid little girls?

More gender stereotypes appear in *The Beast in the Bathtub*. Lewis and his monster friend attempt to steal a snack from the kitchen without attracting the attention of Mom and Dad as they watch television in the living room. Unfortunately, Lewis and the Beast pretend to be cattle rustlers and cast the parents as "the sheriff and his deputy." Once again, young women are being taught that theirs is the subservient role.

With bad role models and bad messages lurking in virtually every medium, how will our children ever learn to be caring nurturers who respect all living things regardless of age, gender, size, color, income, epidermis, natural habitat, sartorial tastes, family structure, ethnic cuisine, religious faith, and philosophical heritage?

The truth is, as a parent, you just can't edit enough. □

Post-Cold-War Confusion

ANOTHER CHANCE FOR NATO?

Russia has raced far ahead of the West in defining its post–Cold War role. But it's not too late for NATO.

ADRIAN KARATNYCKY

THE SUCCESS of Vladimir Zhirinovsky in Russia's December 12 election sent shock waves through the the world and cast a shadow over NATO's Brussels Summit. The bad news from Russia extends far beyond the 23 per cent support garnered by the fascists. For Russians cast more than two-thirds of their votes for candidates who favor an expansionist foreign policy. They endorsed parties that favor the revival of the Russian empire (Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democrats), or that want to restore the Soviet Union (Gennady Zyuganov's Communists and Mikhail Lapshin's Agrarians, both of which nominated and saw elected candidates who had helped orchestrate the August 1991 coup in an effort to preserve the Soviet Union), or that seek to exert political and economic pressure to recreate a federal state made up of ex-Soviet republics (Nikolai Travkin's Democrats and Arkady Volsky's Civic Union), or that regret the collapse of the federated "Union" state (Grigory Yavlinsky's bloc), or that openly call for the redrawing of Russia's boundaries (former Ambassador to the U.S. Vladimir Lukin).

Almost the entire Russian political elite—reformers and hard-liners alike—today advocate expansionism or hegemonism for their economically troubled country. Yet with Russia's leaders turning toward a menacing foreign policy, the U.S. military presence in Europe is being drastically scaled back from a Cold War level of 300,000 to 100,000 or less.

NATO, the institution that for more than four decades contained Communist expansionism and kept the peace, is languishing. Four years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, NATO has failed to develop a compelling post–Cold War role. Reduced to a marginal role in the former Yugoslavia, the alliance today is an elaborate security structure for a part of the world whose security is not threatened.

The very NATO that took risks to

Mr. Karatnycky, executive director of Freedom House, is co-author of New Nations Rising: The Fall of the Soviets and the Challenge of Independence *(John Wiley).*

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consolidate and protect the community of democratic nations after World War II proved incapable at its January 12–13 Summit of summoning up the will to embrace those who had led the struggle against Communism and are shaping market democracies in Central and Eastern Europe today. Under Zhirinovsky's lengthening shadow, NATO ignored the entreaties of leaders like Poland's Lech Walesa, the Czech Republic's Vaclav Havel, and Bulgaria's Zhelyu Zhelev—even though polls conducted in the weeks before the summit show that a clear majority of French, British, West German, Italian, Belgian, Spanish, and Turkish citizens favor NATO security guarantees for Eastern Europe and support the use of their own country's troops to defend Eastern Europe.

And so, to the West's string of recent failures—Bosnia, Somalia, and Haiti—may well be added a fourth: the inability to develop a credible security structure for post–Cold War Europe while there is still a chance.

At the root of NATO's failure is not the absence of U.S. leadership, but U.S. leadership of the wrong kind. While doubts grow about President Yeltsin's capacity to build a democracy in his country, U.S. policy increasingly appears to be predicated on a partnership with Russia. By treating Russia as a reliable partner and encouraging Russia's view of itself as a major world power, U.S. policy has helped Russia reassert its hegemony in the near abroad. U.S. policy has also led to a sense of isolation and anxiety among the very Central and Eastern European democracies that should be the pillars of the new European order.

Russia Resurgent

WHILE NATO drifts, Russia, under Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, has pursued an imaginative foreign policy. Fending off internal disintegration, fighting a fierce political struggle at home, and facing near economic collapse, Russia—not the U.S.—has emerged as the first country with a coherent and comprehensive post–Cold War foreign policy. Russia has adroitly played to the West's human-rights concerns by exaggerating the "repression" of ethnic Russians in Estonia and Latvia. It has forced Georgia into its sphere of influence, first by aiding insurgent armies in Abkhazia and later by increasing its military presence in the republic to restore stability. By assisting armed insurgents in Azerbaijan, Russia helped topple a democratically elected President, and led to his replacement with a pro-Russian Politiburo crony of Brezhnev's. In Tajikistan, Russia assisted a coup that felled a secular non-Communist government, replacing it with a Communist team that acknowledged Moscow's hegemony. Russian military support for the breakaway Transdniester republic has eroded Moldova's sovereignty. Russia has virtually annexed Belarus by integrating the republic's economy and military into its own. Russia also has wrested control of the Black Sea Fleet from Ukraine, and uses it for its own foreign-policy aims. And Russia has skillfully used the U.S. anti-proliferation establishment to isolate Ukraine internationally.

In Eastern Europe, Russia is to construct a gas pipeline through Poland, increasing its influence in Warsaw while exerting new pressure on Ukraine, through which all Russian natural gas to Europe now passes. By deftly employing the threat of veto at the UN Security Council, Russia has stymied an assertive anti-Serbian policy. Russia has also attempted to reduce U.S. influence in Europe. In mid December Foreign Minister Kozyrev declared Russia and Germany should create "an axis . . . to guarantee stability and the continuation of democratic processes in Europe, including its Central and Eastern part."

In the Far East, Russia has signed an agreement allowing it to maintain a naval presence in Vietnam. And it has taken a tough position on the occupied Kurile Islands, offering the Japanese no concessions, while extracting some aid.

NATO's eastward expansion gathered steam as a result of President Yeltsin's visit in August to Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, where he affirmed that membership was a matter for each sovereign state. The green light for a fast track to NATO's enlargement raised high hopes in Eastern Europe.

Yeltsin reversed himself on September 30 in a letter to NATO leaders that warned against the alliance's extension. Instead of repudiating Russia's heavy-handed interference in the affairs of states outside its sphere of influence, the U.S. maintained a deliberate silence. Three weeks later, after Yeltsin defeated parliamentary hardliners occupying the Russian White House, the U.S. caved in and proposed a "Partnership for Peace" at a meeting of NATO defense ministers.

Partnership for Peace was more than a retreat from rapid extension of NATO into Central Europe. Far from offering inducements to countries that have made major strides toward political pluralism and market reform, Partnership for Peace appears to wipe the slate clean. Every country from Central and Eastern Europe and the ex-USSR is disingenuously invited to participate, including Central Asian states with no links to Europe or the Atlantic. The Partnership offers no clear road map or timetable for countries seeking to join NATO, and it extends the same hand of cooperation to countries with no interest in joining NATO as it does to new democracies pressing for early entry. As Zbigniew Brzezinski put it, "The proposal equates the Czech Republic with Tajikistan. It treats emerging democracies and brutal tyrannies similarly."

The Spirit of Yalta

THE PROPOSAL, approved at NATO's Summit, has generated dismay and unease among East Europeans. In late October, Czech President Havel stated: "If the West refuses Central European states the right to become full-fledged members of the European integration structures, including NATO, it would mean a return to the spirit of Yalta." Such comments, joined by Lech Walesa's powerful calls for NATO's extension, have had only a small effect. Where first the U.S. spoke only of the "possibility" of eventual NATO expansion, the NATO Summit spoke of expansion, but far off in the future.

Ironically, while motivated by concern that enlarging NATO might weaken Yeltsin in his battle with hard-line opponents, Western dalliance and concessions have only increased the appetites of Russia's leaders. In November 1993, Russia unveiled its new military doctrine, which sounds aggressive notes. The doctrine defines "the introduction of foreign troops on the territory of neighboring states" as constituting "an immediate military threat to the Russian Federa-

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tion." It asserts that Russia's nuclear arsenal can be used against any country allied with a nuclear state, rather than the previous Soviet practice of targeting countries which possess nuclear weapons or permit their stationing. According to Valery Manilev of Russia's National Security Council, the provision is intended "to keep the states of the CIS and East Central Europe outside the NATO orbit."

Foreign Minister Kozyrev also elaborated a tougher line, asserting Russia's responsibility "for stability in this part of the world" and warning that efforts to create a *cordon sanitaire* around Russia "could be crushed in any situation." To give teeth to this threat, Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev announced that Russia would field a military force of 2.1 million men—not 1.5 million as earlier announced. As the daily *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* put it recently: "Russian diplomats were mistakenly accused of not having a clearly thought out foreign-policy concept." Russia, indeed, did have a coherent policy aimed at enlarging its influence in the former Soviet bloc. However, this aim "couldn't be made public" because it would have alarmed the West.

The Clinton Administration's policy is not to react. As Secretary of State Christopher told the *Washington Post*'s Jim Hoagland: "We cannot engage in a neo-containment of Russia." Such remarks underscore that the U.S. has, thus far, done nothing to limit Russia's insatiable appetite for hegemony. It will be interesting to see how these remarks will now be interpreted by Russia's new parliamentary majority, which supports the restoration of the old borders of the USSR.

In Central Europe, the West's—and especially the United States'—tilt toward Russia defies comprehension. As Hungarian Foreign Minister Geza Jeszenszky put it: "I cannot accept the idea of a new 'great alliance' this time between NATO and Russia, a new umbrella held over Hungary and its neighbors."

For Central Europe, Ukraine—not Russia—is the key to a peaceful Europe. Ukraine has two-thirds the tanks, combat aircraft, and armored personnel carriers of European Russia. Its conventional military arsenal is more modern than that inherited by the Russian military. Ukraine, moreover, has shown a respect for the sovereignty of its neighbors and has made impressive efforts to protect the rights of ethnic minorities. This contrasts markedly with Russia's stated commitment to protect the rights not only of Russian citizens but also of ethnic Russians—even of "Russian speakers"—who live abroad.

"We'd better call in an ethics specialist."

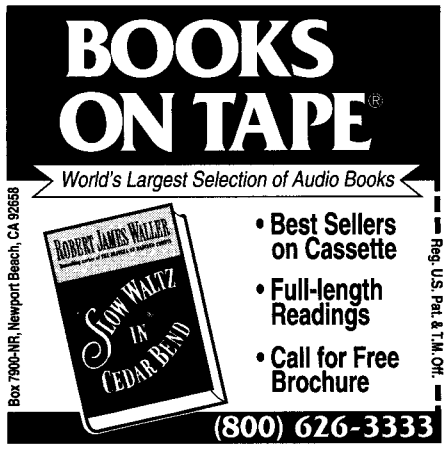
The sovereignty won by Ukraine, Moldova, and the Baltic states will not be surrendered without struggle. Thus Russia's push toward hegemony carries within it the seeds of conflict. Moreover, a Russia preoccupied with the affairs of its neighbors will be a Russia that expends a higher proportion of its treasure on defense.

It is the West's policy of concessions that has helped put Russia back in the game in Central Europe. And the West's current mixed signals on NATO's enlargement, by stymying the creation of a security arrangement within Central and Eastern Europe, may leave a dangerous legacy—a lasting regional security vacuum. As a result, East European states will hold off on making cuts in military spending, causing strains on fragile economies in transition to a free market. Lost, too, will be the opportunity to create mechanisms for broader cooperation in a region beset by ethnic tensions and irredentist sentiments.

As Vaclav Havel has compellingly argued, "bringing NATO closer to Russian borders means bringing closer democracy and stabilization." NATO as currently configured is no longer up to the task for which it was created: to protect vulnerable free societies from the encroachment of aggressive states. Yet NATO's expansion must be thought through in a way that does not isolate Russia's neighbor, Ukraine. The best way to do this is to transform NATO into a military-political alliance that is the anchor of a Euro-Atlantic security system. That system should be open to the eventual incorporation of a democratic Ukraine, and of Russia, if it succeeds in its transformation from a tyranny to a free society.

At the NATO Summit, President Clinton and Secretary Christopher argued against drawing a new boundary in Europe. Unfortunately, that boundary has already been drawn—by Russia, through its relentless efforts to create a unified military bloc under the Commonwealth of Independent States. One of the conditions of a democratic Russia's eventual entry into a Euro-Atlantic security pact would be the dissolution of any CIS defense pact.

For Central and Eastern Europe and for those who believe in a strong alliance, NATO's Summit was a disappointment. But it was not a disaster. If the Partnership for Peace is the first step toward rapid expansion of NATO eastward, it may become a way station on the road to a new Euro-Atlantic security system. Clearly, that road has not yet closed. But with Russia's imperialists gathering strength, quick action and decisive U.S. leadership will be needed very soon. □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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

January 11, 1994

Dear Rusty,

Well, here I am again, in Air Force Two, pounding away on my PowerBook. I spent the day in L.A., giving the keynote address at a conference of the Television Academy of Arts and Sciences. I think it went over pretty well, though I was kind of jet-lagged and that always throws off my comic timing.

The trip to L.A. was the high point of the past two weeks, Rusty. We've been going through another one of those rough patches. This Whitewater thing just will not go away. Republicans keep acting as if the Clintons and this guy McDougal were like Nixon and Bebe Rebozo. Tipper keeps saying, "they ought to know," but I think the comparison is way, way off.

It's hard to know what to do, because Bill and Mr. Gergen are in Europe. (Tipper and I went on our own trip to Moscow last month, and I had this big speech to give in Los Angeles—that's why I didn't go along.) So the only people back at home to deal with this Whitewater business are George Stephanopoulos, HRC, me, and Tipper. Talk about your skeleton crew!

In a lot of ways, though, I'm not sure that's a bad thing, because it really gives me a chance to take off the gloves and come out fighting. I came up with a whole list of possible approaches to take right before I appeared on the Brinkley show last week. As usual, Tipper was my most valuable counselor.

"I see here," she said, "that you plan to challenge Jim McDougal to a debate on Larry King?"

"That's right," I said.

"I think he's in prison, Al."

"Scratch that one. How about Plan B?"

"Hmmmm," she said. "I guess all those calls for a special councel could be characterized as politically motivated—but then you'd have to explain why Sam Nunn, Pat Moynihan, Bill Bradley, and a growing list of other Democrats also think he should appoint one."

"Don't forget Jim Leach," I said, glumly.

"Al—Jim Leach is a Republican."

"Really?" I asked. "He sure doesn't vote like one."

"Trust me, Al. Now, look, you're getting yourself all worked up. Let them appoint a special counsel. If there's nothing to find, as Bill and Hillary keep saying over and over and over again, then they get to stay and everything reverts back to the original schedule. But if there is something to the conflict-of-interest charges against the Rose law firm, if the loans from International Paper were predicated on subsequent tax breaks granted by then Governor Bill Clinton, if then chief counsel to the McDougal S&L, Hillary Rodham Clinton, knowingly withheld information from two separate overseeing bodies, destroyed pertinent corporate records, and conspired with longtime associate Vincent Foster to mislead federal regulators, well, then, I guess we can put the Lincoln Sitting Room back the way it was and get rid of that ghastly flocked wallpaper a lot sooner than we had planned."

"Gosh, Tip. You're pretty up to speed on this."

"You know me, Al," she smiled. "I like to keep up."

After the Brinkley show, I popped into my office to pick up the latest issue of Wired magazine. I was just about to leave when HRC stuck her head in.

"Can I talk to you for a second, Al?"

"Sure," I said.

"I want to thank you for what you said on TV today. I don't think we need an independent counsel. Since when do we take the word of two indicted businessmen over the wife of the President of the United States? Are they trying to give the country free health care?"

"I don't think so."

"Of course not. But that's not what I came to talk to you about. In all likelihood, Bill is going to cave in and tell Janet Reno to appoint a prosecutor. And if that happens, we're all going to be so busy with complying with the investigators that I won't have time to buy Bill a birthday present. So I bought him one today. And I was wondering if you'd keep it around the house—your house, I mean—for a few years. I mean weeks."

"You're giving Bill a box of files for his birthday?"

"They're dessert recipes, Al," she said quickly. "You know Bill."

Of course I took them home. Actually, I thought it a very sweet gesture, though I have to confess that a part of me was thinking that if HRC had spent a little more time baking cookies instead of representing the Whitewater Development Corporation, maybe we wouldn't be in this mess. But if she wants to make amends by giving Bill free rein, dessert-wise, more power to her.

I took the box home and hid it in my closet, next to the attaché case I'm holding for Ron Brown, for his wife's birthday. I don't know why people keep asking me to hold things for them. I guess it's because I can keep a secret. When I want to, Rusty, I can put up a pretty decent poker face. But if we get any more thoughtful, generous people in this Administration, I'm going to have to invest in a wall safe.

Best wishes, Al

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Mr. Jaffa's Constitution

ROBERT H. BORK

THE meaning of the Constitution of the United States, it turns out, is no more and no less than one's heart's desire. Both constitutional jurisprudence and constitutional scholarship are largely exercises in wish fulfillment. That conservative intellectuals are as guilty of this as liberal intellectuals probably means that a jurisprudence of the actual principles of the Constitution as those were understood by the men who made them law is impossible for the foreseeable future.

There is one way to tell the liberals and conservatives apart at a glance. On picking up a book on constitutional theory—if, for some reason, you should wish to do that—look for the animating catchphrase. If the author says "moral reasoning," he is a liberal; if he says "natural law," he is a conservative. In either case, he will find things in the Constitution that are not there. Whichever, put the book down at once and go on to something useful.

Original Intent and the Framers of the Constitution: A Disputed Question, by Harry V. Jaffa (Regnery, 400 pp., $24)

These somber thoughts are inspired by Professor Harry Jaffa's new book, *Original Intent and the Framers of the Constitution: A Disputed Question.* The book reprints various essays by Mr. Jaffa and by some of his milder critics. To the uninitiated, the title may offer hope. At last, such an innocent might think, we are to get an historical account of what the Framers did intend and a demonstration of why their intentions are the only legitimate basis for constitutional jurisprudence. Alas, that reader will soon find that Mr. Jaffa is no more committed to the original understanding than the rest of the constitutional clerisy: he defines original intent so that it rises above the meaning of the Constitution itself.

Before turning to the substance of the essays, it must be said that one of the book's notable qualities is the venom with which Professor Jaffa addresses those he regards as adversaries, just about all of them conservatives: Jeane Kirkpatrick, Irving Kristol, Edwin Meese, Russell Kirk, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., William Rehnquist, and, I rejoice to say, given the company to which I am assigned, me. It turns out, for reasons that are not entirely clear, that most of us are disciples of the late, unlamented John C. Calhoun. At other times we are identified with Karl Marx. Mr. Jaffa claims Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Abraham Lincoln for himself, thus gaining a sizable head start in the debate.

D. F. Bach

Putting aside what would be a very considerable quibble over intellectual antecedents, when Mr. Jaffa launches into his argument he quickly dissipates the advantage he has awarded himself. His reasoning runs like this: The Declaration of Independence enunciates truths of natural law; the principles of the Declaration inform the Constitution; and, for that reason, the Constitution must be interpreted as if those principles had been written into it. (I have discussed three rather more temperate theorists who adopt similar positions in "Natural Law and the Constitution," *First Things*, March 1992, and "Natural Law and the Law: An Exchange," *First Things*, May 1992.)

Natural law appears in the first paragraph of the Declaration in the claim that Americans are entitled to separate from Great Britain and to assume "the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them." These laws begin the second paragraph:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these, are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That, to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the consent of the governed.

These are noble words, words of high aspiration, but it is unclear what they add to our reading of the Constitution. We know, for example, that the "unalienable Rights" did not become constitutional absolutes: the Bill of Rights expressly contemplates the punishment of crimes by the deprivation of liberty and life, both of which certainly tend to interfere with the pursuit of happiness. The upshot is that, so far as the Constitution is concerned, these rights are unalienable unless society has reason to take them away.

Mr. Jaffa takes me severely to task for having said that "our constitutional liberties arose out of historical experience. . . . They do not rest upon any general theory." Citing the Declaration once more and a number of state constitutions asserting that all men are born free and equal, etc., he wonders whether I have "ever read a single document of our Founding." Well, I suppose the Constitution qualifies as one. The liberties to be found there clearly derive from historical ex-

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perience with the British Crown and the states' fear of the new federal power. The First Amendment's prohibition of the establishment of religion reflected not only the fact that various denominations feared a federal choice of one but that six states had established religions which they did not want Congress to supplant. The Second Amendment's right to bear arms was supposed to protect against any tyrannizing tendencies of the central government. The Third Amendment's prohibition of the quartering of troops in private homes in peacetime was a reaction to the British practice in the colonies, as was the Fourth Amendment's ban of unreasonable searches and seizures and general warrants. And so it goes. One wonders, for example, what natural-law theory produced the Seventh Amendment's guarantee of a jury trial in common-law suits involving more than twenty dollars.

NOR IS THE original Constitution much more help to the proponent of a general theory of human liberty. The writ of habeas corpus is guaranteed and bills of attainder prohibited, again based on historical experience. The ban on state laws impairing the obligation of contracts reacted to the practice of relieving debtors of their obligation to repay. There is simply no point in nattering on about declarations of freedom and equality as though they constituted a general theory of liberty that was written into the Constitution. They don't and it wasn't.

It is the proposition that "all men are created equal" that Mr. Jaffa finds particularly enlightening for purposes of constitutional interpretation. It is not clear, however, what the principle means for modern problems. Equality was not explicitly incorporated in the Constitution (as the "equal protection of the laws") until the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified in 1868. The history of its judicial interpretation reminds us that "equality" is a most ambiguous concept, one whose content fluctuates with the mores and fads of the times. It is not at all clear how the tenet that all men are created equal would bear upon issues such as women in combat, abortion, homosexual rights, affirmative action, the death penalty, or other topics that vex us and the courts today. This suggests that the Declaration offers a very limited glimpse of natural law and hence, even on Mr. Jaffa's terms, offers little guidance for constitutional interpretation.

The subject he most wishes to discuss, and does so over and over again, is the bearing of the Declaration, and hence the Constitution, on slavery. Here, his argument is startling. Though the Framers left slavery untouched out of a prudent desire to form a Union, Mr. Jaffa thinks the Supreme Court could, nevertheless, properly have used their document, without benefit of any federal legislation, to extinguish slavery in the federal territories. Mr. Jaffa focuses on *Dred Scott* v. *Sandford*. The facts are familiar. Scott, a slave, was taken by his master from a slave state, Missouri, to federal territory where Congress had forbidden slavery in the Missouri Compromise of 1820, and then back to Missouri. Scott sued for his freedom on the theory that he became free when on land where slavery was outlawed. The Supreme Court, in an opinion by Chief Justice Roger Taney, ruled against Scott and in the process held that the Missouri Compromise's outlawing of slavery in federal territory was unconstitutional. That effectively denied the Federal Government the power to prohibit slavery not only in federal lands but in new states admitted to the Union.

In a passage that infuriates Mr. Jaffa, I have written that Taney created a constitutional right to own slaves in federal territories although there is no such right to be found in the Constitution. Taney created such a right by converting the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment from a guarantee of fair procedures to a guarantee of what he regarded as fair substance: "an act of Congress which deprives a citizen of the United States of his liberty or property, merely because he came himself or brought his property into a particular Territory of the United States, and who had committed no offense against the laws, could hardly be dignified with the name of due process of law." Hence Scott remained a slave.

Mr. Jaffa attacks my analysis in terms that might, if one wished to be generous, be called offensive. He argues that the Constitution recognizes a right to own slaves in the clauses requiring states to return fugitive slaves to their owners, providing for state representation in the House by adding to the number of free persons three-fifths of all others, and preventing Congress from prohibiting the importation of slaves prior to 1808. Thus, he concludes, I made my "case against Taney only by the most shameless expurgating and bowdlerizing of the Constitution's text." Let us examine that claim.

The Constitution certainly recognized that slaves were held pursuant to the laws of some states, but the Constitution most emphatically did not guarantee such a right. The obligation of states to return fugitive slaves did not mean that Congress could not forbid slavery in territories it governed any more than the state obliged to return the fugitives was forbidden to outlaw slavery on its own territory. The three-fifths clause was designed to limit slave-state representation in Congress. The importation clause was a compromise that delayed a federal ban on the importation of slaves for twenty years. How any of this adds up to justifying Taney's invention of a constitutional right to own slaves in federal territory remains a complete mystery.

At the time of *Dred Scott*, slavery was left to state laws, which could protect or prohibit the institution. Congress has legislative power over territories more complete than a state legislature has over its state, for the state legislature may not interfere with the exercise of federal power. There can be nothing constitutionally wrong, therefore, if Congress defines what may or may not be property within a federal territory. In the Missouri Compromise, Congress said that persons could not be property in a designated part of federal territory. That is why *Dred Scott* was a usurpation of congressional power accomplished, Mr. Jaffa to the contrary notwithstanding, through Taney's invention of substantive due process.

THE MOST that can be made of the unexpurgated and unbowdlerized text is that the Constitution did not of its own force forbid slavery. That is why it is startling to see Mr. Jaffa reverse his field and, in a mirror image of Taney's opinion, pour his own substance into a purely procedural provision in order to state that the due-process clause of the Fifth Amendment accomplished just

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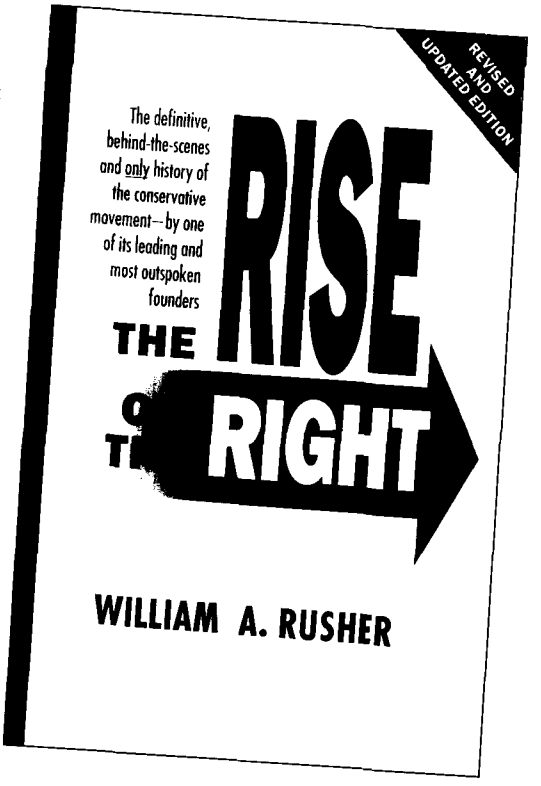
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that. Taney went wrong, he says, because that clause prevents a person from being deprived of liberty without due process of law, which slaves were not afforded. This reflects "the laws of nature and nature's God," so that the "positive law of slavery might overrule the law of nature in the slave states, but it could not extend beyond their boundaries, except for the reclaiming of fugitives."

That is, quite literally, an incredible proposition. It produces two preposterous results. If a slave and his owner entered a Northern territory where slavery was forbidden by the Missouri Compromise, the due-process clause would have no effect whatever because that clause forbids only the Federal Government from depriving a person of liberty. It has no application to private individuals. Thus, Dred Scott, who was not deprived of liberty by any federal law, could not have been freed by the due-process clause. Mr. Jaffa's position collapses. He has rewritten the Constitution to transform a prohibition of government action into a prohibition of private action.

But matters are worse even than that. Mr. Jaffa's argument means that if Scott had been taken to a Southern territory where the Missouri Compromise allowed slavery, he *would* have been able to claim freedom under the due-process clause because the Compromise was federal law that deprived him of liberty. Thus, the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional not, as Taney thought, because it barred slavery in the northern part of the Louisiana Territory, but, following Mr. Jaffa's argument, because it allowed slavery in the southern part. Not even Lincoln made that claim. But perhaps he did not understand the Constitution's incorporation of the Declaration of Independence as well as Professor Jaffa does.

Mr. Jaffa asks us to believe that the men of the Philadelphia Convention who wrote the Constitution, those in Congress who proposed the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and those in the states who ratified both laid down principles which they clearly had no intention of endorsing and which are contradicted by the words of the document itself. There would have been no Constitution and no Fifth Amendment due-process clause if the ratifying Southern states had understood that a later natural-law sleight of hand could deprive them of what they had bargained for.

One of Mr. Jaffa's many difficulties is that he, like the liberal activists he resembles, displays no awareness of the difference between politics and law. My writings, which he savages, dealt with the duty of the judiciary in applying existing law, not with the declaration of political principles. Thus, he is wrong when he says that my position "rejects, root and branch," a resolution of the 1860 Republican Platform proclaiming that the principles of the Declaration of Independence embodied in the Constitution, which are quoted above, are "essential to the preservation of our Republican institutions." He also quotes, without noticing the contradiction, another part of that platform promising not to interfere with states' control of their own institutions. Moreover, if Mr. Jaffa thinks that slavery was somehow guaranteed by the Constitution, it is he who rejects the first resolution.

Again and again, Mr. Jaffa quotes Jefferson, Madison, and others about the principles of equality, liberty, and natural rights. "No one can at one and the same time be a legal positivist and an adherent of the original intentions of the Framers. For the Framers were very far from being either moral skeptics or legal positivists. Their commitment to the natural rights and natural law doctrine of the Declaration of Independence represented the most profound of their original intentions." That observation is simply silly. The Framers were not legal positivists for the very good reason that no one who makes law can be. The lawgiver must have ideas of right and wrong that antecede the law he makes. The Framers wrote law, presumably embodying as much of their thinking on natural rights as prudence allowed, and the judge is bound to follow that law no matter what *he* thinks of its correspondence to natural law. That means that, in his judicial capacity though in no other, the judge must be a legal positivist. Which further means, contrary to Mr. Jaffa, that only a legal-positivist judge can be an adherent of the Framers' original intent.

Written in dyspeptic prose, *Original Intent and the Framers of the Constitution* is one of the least coherent, least consequential, and most disingenuous pieces of constitutional theorizing on record: incoherent because Mr. Jaffa offers conclusions that cannot possibly be tortured out of constitutional text, history, or structure; inconsequential because, so far as is apparent, his argument has application only to one pre–Civil War case; disingenuous because he misrepresents not only that case but the Constitution itself. This may sound unduly harsh. I have tried to show that it is only duly harsh. □

The Trashman Cometh

DAVID GARRARD LOWE

CIVILIZATION is often indicated in unexpected ways: those black-and-white photographs of the streets of New York at the depth of the Great Depression with all the men wearing hats; the way that a French shopkeeper insists on the obligatory *bon jour* before entering into a transaction. The lack of anything remotely resembling civilization or certainly high civilization is strikingly evident in the images described by James Gardner, art critic for *NR*, in his fascinating book *Culture or Trash?* For those who believe that painting and sculpture should be imbued with grace and beauty and even perhaps purvey worthy values, reading this book is like descending into Dante's *Inferno*.

Culture or Trash? A Provocative View of Contemporary Painting, Sculpture, and Other Costly Commodities, by James Gardner (Birch Lane, 227 pp., $19.95)

The reader is treated to an inventory of so-called art which would delight a Marquis de Sade or, better, a group of undisciplined schoolboys. There is the French performance artist Orlan, who employs plastic surgery

Mr. Lowe is gallery director at the New York School of Interior Design and the author most recently of Stanford White's New York *(Doubleday).*

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to make her own body her canvas; Julian Schnabel, whose composition of shattered plates glued onto Masonite bears the edifying title *Circumnavigating the Sea of S---*; and Kiki Smith, who in 1989 displayed 12 empty glass jars engraved with the words *Sweat*, *Urine*, *Semen*, *Diarrhea*, *Vomit*, etc.

How did the art world wander into this aesthetic desert? At the very beginning of *Culture or Trash?* Mr. Gardner provides a clue when he quotes Mario Equicola, a contemporary of Leonardo da Vinci: "Painting is a work and a labor of the body rather than of the mind, and is, more often than not, exercised by the ignorant." Mr. Gardner goes on to wonder whether one person in a million today would share this sentiment, and *Culture or Trash?* reveals why his surmise is undoubtedly correct, for this book shows just how far the perception of the artist as a wise, even sacred, being has progressed.

As the quotation from Equicola makes clear, this state of affairs is a fairly recent development. "The art world as we know it is several centuries old," Mr. Gardner writes. "For Alberti and his fifteenth-century contemporaries it didn't exist, since art as yet was the province of sovereigns, princes of the Church, and captains of finance." Then, the subjects for painting and sculpture were supplied by the literature and legends of ancient Greece and Rome, by Scripture and the theology of the Church, and by the history of principalities. There was also, to give even more form to the discipline of artists, a hierarchy—if we dare use that word—which ranked the genres of painting: "At the top you had historical and religious paintings, generally rather large. Beneath them was portraiture and beneath that tavern scenes, still lifes, and landscapes," Mr. Gardner explains. "It all sounds pretty idiotic these days, as it probably should. But is it not possible that we have erred in the other direction?" Yes, it is possible. One of the frustrating things about this very good book is that Mr. Gardner—who is so knowledgeable about the contemporary art scene, so scrupulously fair in his judgment, as when he says nice things about the work of Keith Haring and Kenny Sharf—too often throws out a very good argument and then does not follow it up. He, as it were, lights the fuse and then scampers away.

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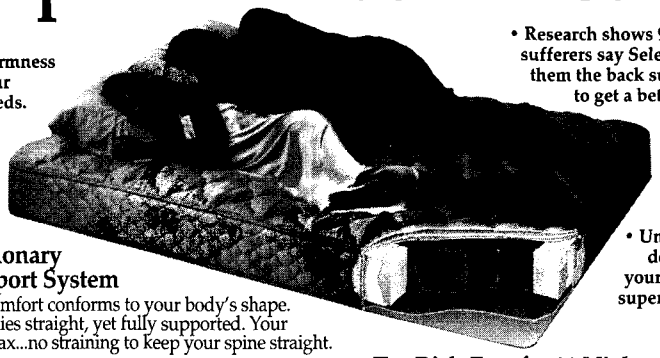

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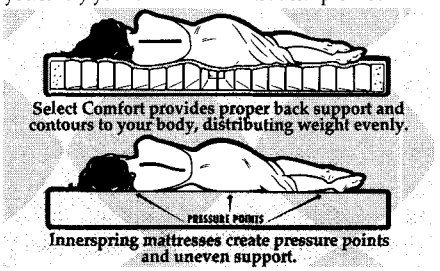

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Couldn't a case be made for some sort of hierarchy if its presence in the fifteenth century produced Piero della Francesca's *Resurrection* and its absence in the twentieth resulted in Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ*?

At one point in his book, Mr. Gardner quotes a line from Matthew Arnold to the effect that we are "Wandering between two worlds, one dead,/ The other powerless to be born." Time and again while reading *Culture or Trash?* one finds oneself thinking of the great English critic, particularly of his magisterial essay "Culture and Anarchy." It is filled with antidotes for the concoctions of Mr. Serrano and company:

> But culture indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that.

This, of course, is a passage jam packed with what today's practicing aestheticians would condemn as heresy. In his finely organized book, with its essay-like chapters titled "The Age of Art," "The Chattering Class," "The Realms of Abstraction," etc., Mr. Gardner makes it abundantly clear why the contemporary art world would look upon such words as "beautiful," "graceful," and "becoming" with all the enthusiasm with which a top hat—if worn with seriousness—would be received at a heavy-metal concert. He dissects the self-absorption, the cultural xenophobia, the hermeticism, and the economic manipulations of a clique that produces the hype to attract buyers willing to bid $100,000 for Jeff Koons's basketballs floating in a tank of water, and to lead the Guggenheim Museum to pay a reputed $35 million for a collection of some three hundred works by American minimalists when the objects had never been constructed, but existed only on paper. The fix is in, the cards are marked, and in a splendidly written passage Mr. Gardner shows how the alchemy is achieved:

> The truth is that critics no longer criticize, except in the sense that, publicly, they praise everything. The thought of publishing a dissent makes most of them uneasy. In other circumstances, this would be an admirable and humane compunction. But for those who seek their livelihood, such as it is, in judging art, it represents a dereliction in their duties to their readers and to the truth. It is likewise perfectly understandable that most people would disrelish the thought of being chased by a furious bull. But in that case they should not become matadors.

In his epilogue, Mr. Gardner touches upon what the collapse of Communism might mean to the world of art and presents the possibility that the "revolutionary temperament" which has dominated painting and sculpture since the storming of the Bastille two centuries ago might be on the verge of becoming passé. If that era is now truly over—this is a thesis worthy of Mr. Gardner's next book—and we are about to sail into calmer seas, all sorts of cheerful possibilities appear on the horizon. To begin with, one might hope that a flicker of praise, a flash of admiration would brighten art's currently dark chamber. After all, disparagement is not necessarily the food upon which painting and sculpture must feed. And disparagement is what the 1993 Whitney Biennial—where 82 artists in 142 works, as Mr. Gardner puts it, "merrily collapsed their common humanity in a withering sequence of self-imposed stereotypes about racial, physical, and sexual identity"—was all about. A highlight of that exhibition—the feminist artist Sue Williams's puddle of plastic vomit lying on the floor before a painting of fat thighs and the words "One thing I've gotten with age is free to choose. I chose fat thighs"—is not, I would say, the standard to which art must repair. How far we have traveled downward from the bright realms where the Greeks used bronze to mold gods and heroes, where Bernini drew St. Theresa in Ecstasy from a block of marble, and Rembrandt's oils captured forever the good burghers of the Dutch Republic!

In his insightful discussion of a group of artists, including the Italian Carlo Maria Mariani and the Scot Ian Hamilton Finlay, who embrace a type of neoclassicism, Mr. Gardner notes that while they are "enamored of the monumentality of the classical style," they "can't find anything worth commemorating." At the heart of this malaise is the fact that there is now no public body of belief. Thus we come full circle and must return again to Mario Equicola's pronouncement that painters are intellectually somewhat dim. Indeed, all of the evidence indicates that artists, with rare exceptions, have accomplished their supreme work when they had a *donnée*, a given, a set of shared assumptions. What if Michelangelo had been required to invent the scenario of the Sistine Chapel ceiling?

But shared assumptions on the part of the viewer assume some knowledge of theology, mythology, and history, and this cannot be expected of a public becoming daily less cognizant of all the great traditions. When, in the sixteenth century, Titian painted *The Annunciation*, he could be certain that his viewers would be acquainted with every nuance of the event. The harsh truth is that, intellectually, most contemporary art is easy art. What intelligence does it take to understand the simplistic contrivances of a Serrano or a Sue Williams?

Mr. Gardner's challenging book ushers us into a world where the ignorant lead the ignorant. Upon reading *Culture or Trash?* one is tempted to construct a modern version of the *Inferno* in which the true horror of damnation is that the damned, unfamiliar with history or theology or mythology, do not even know who the great sinners are with whom they must share eternity. In "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," T. S. Eliot has these lines:

> In the room the women come and go
> Talking of Michelangelo.

After reading *Culture or Trash?* the reader can only lament: Would that it were so! Would that it were so! □

Lady Killer

MAGGIE GALLAGHER

SHE'S big, she's bad, and she's beautiful—she's every woman's nightmare. Meet Zenia, of the big hair, the Barbie-doll waist, the surgically enhanced curves—the dark star of Margaret Atwood's latest literary blockbuster. Set in Toronto, *The Robber Bride* tells the tale of three

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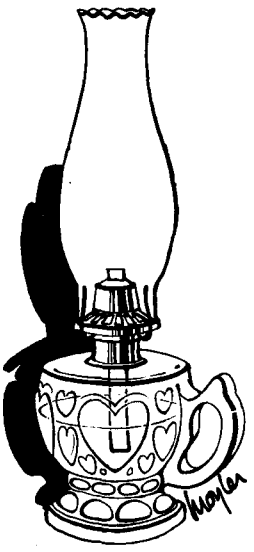
women: Tony, a war historian; Roz, a rich businesswoman; and Charis, a New Age airhead, all of whose comfortable lives with men are threatened by the Machiavellian maneuvers of the devastating Zenia, the Nietzschean Uberwench with the voracious will to power, a gal who destroys for the fun of it: "The perfume she's wearing is unrecognizable: something dense and murky, sullen and ominous. The smell of scorched earth."



Miss Atwood is a gifted writer who casts a superficially convincing net of realism over her basically surrealistic tales. At first glance she appears to do for the feminine half of Toronto what Tom Wolfe in *Bonfire of the Vanities* did for masculine New York: to portray, with an excruciatingly exact eye for physical details, the internal, spiritual, and psychological world in which people now live. Only Miss Atwood offers not a precise accounting of male status symbols (wristwatches, briefcases, cars) but a solidly feminine list of objects: food, dress, make-up, bubble bath, shop windows.

Yet her female characters soon come to seem too perfectly cast, like the composites of a dishonest journalist. Charis, for example, is abandoned by her mother *and* sexually abused by her uncle. Roz, on the other hand, the daughter of a slick Jewish father and a Catholic peasant mother, is twisted by nuns who are anti-sex *and* anti-Semitic. Gradually, it becomes apparent that the author has set her hand through for Miss Atwood, whose best-known previous work, *The Handmaiden's Tale*, was a feminist dystopia about a world in which fundamentalist Christian men have reduced women to breeders. Here, in apparent contrast, she seems at pains to say: *Men may be pains in the neck, but so too are women.* Tony's interest in war is considered by her female colleagues to be a kind of betrayal. "She ought to be studying birth; not deaths." And one of her feminist colleagues, much to Tony's annoyance, has charged her with teaching a course that is (gasp!) Eurocentric: "Of course it's Eurocentric!" Tony replies. "What do you expect in a course called 'Merovingian Siege Strategy'?"

Roz, the lady president, has similar female troubles. "It's complicated, being a woman boss. Women don't look at you and think *Boss*. They look at you and think *Woman*, as in *Just another one, like me, and where does she get off*?"

At the heart of the story, of course, are the devilishly cruel antics of Zenia, man-eater, woman destroyer. But if Zenia is the villain, a careful reader will notice she is a very odd sort of villain. If she pains her women friends, it is largely by forcing them to face what Miss Atwood considers truths—truths about men—they would rather avoid. *You have made them the center of your life*, Zenia, the bad girl, tells the three good ones, *and they have discarded you like a used-up dishrag at the first whiff of sex.*

"Come on, you're not a baby," Zenia tells Charis. "He loves your a--. Or some other body part, how would I know? Anyway, for sure it's not your soul, it's not *you*. . . . Believe me, there's only one thing any man ever wants from a woman, and that's sex. How much you can get them to pay for it is the important thing." To prove her point, Zenia runs off with Charis's boyfriend. Zenia becomes every man's fantasy in order to prove that every man's love is a fantasy. She is a Surgeon General's warning to all women: A man's home may be his castle, but yours is just a castle in the air.

Surely, it is no accident that the sin-

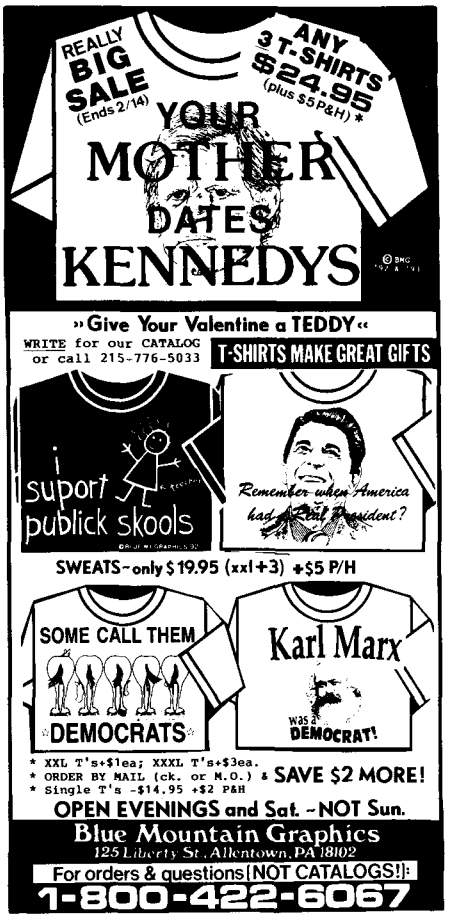
The Robber Bride, by Margaret Atwood (Doubleday, 466 pp., $22.50)

at making, not individuals, but types—archetypes, in fact, for a modern fairy tale, awaiting a latter-day Bruno Bettelheim to decode them.

There are male characters aplenty, but we never get inside their heads. They are not even men, really, but mannequins, plot devices, prizes for which women fight.

The Robber Bride is being trumpeted as a kind of post-feminist break-

Miss Gallagher is a columnist for New York Newsday.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gle male character who is reliably kind to women is Boyce, Roz's homosexual assistant. And Larry, Roz's son, who is so helpful after the divorce, turns out in the end to be Boyce's lover. Nor is it any accident that just about the only female characters who are not damaged by sexual politics are Roz's twin daughters. In Miss Atwood's bleak world, the only good man is a gay man. And the only healthy women are girls.

One character, Tony, does manage to keep her man, but not her idealized image of him. Two, Roz and Charis, lose their men to Zenia, but as the story makes abundantly clear, they are better off alone: *What does not kill me makes me stronger.*

Zenia may steal their men, but she also brings the three women together, and gives them the only reliable, adult love they have. So it is not surprising, perhaps, that Miss Atwood ends on a note of admiration for her alleged villainess: "A ritual cannon shot, the flag lowering to half-mast, a single bugle note quivering in the silvery air. Other dead fighters get that, so why not Zenia?"

The Robber Bride is not social realism but moral allegory, and less a dramatic breakthrough for the author than a return to familiar themes: a feminist fairy tale, as the title suggests, in which men appear not as ogres but as sad-sacks, and women as their easily duped and all too willing accomplices. □

FILM

Romancing AIDS

JOHN SIMON

AIDS has finally made it into mainline Hollywood cinema, and its first appearance has been hooplaed as if it were the Second Coming. ***Philadelphia*** was made by Jonathan Demme, whose *The Silence of the Lambs* was attacked in certain quarters because its murderer was a homosexual and transvestite, and the film was thus thought to be disrespectful to homosexuals, transvestites, and, for all I know, murderers. Unleashed, the minority mentality can sniff out disrespect in more places than a hyperactive dog can buried bones.

As an act of penance, Mr. Demme proceeded to make this *Philadelphia*, as it is called with heavy irony: the City of Brotherly Love exposed for its lack of fair play, decency, and brotherly love. But the trouble with genuflection is that, whatever its other uses, it is not the right posture for making movies. This one oozes reverence and self-righteousness in equal measure, and pins so many medals on its own chest that you can hardly see the movie beneath them.

It is the story—or such part of it as is deemed housebroken—of Andrew Beckett, a terrific young lawyer in a Philadelphia firm, who comes down with AIDS. He doesn't tell his employers, but when a lesion is spotted on his forehead, he is fired on grossly trumped-up charges of incompetence. He sues the firm, but the only lawyer he can get to represent him is Joe Miller, a black ambulance chaser who crassly promotes his services on TV. A macho man, Joe hates homosexuals; it is only when he happens to see how Andrew is discriminated against even in the reading room of the public library that the connection between discriminations dawns on him.

Already things are a bit too good to be true. What kind of name is Andrew Beckett? A prince or a Carnegie might be Andrew, and a saint or a Nobel laureate might be Beckett, but a lawyer who, on top of that, contracts AIDS? As for the rough-riding Joe Miller, he has a lovely and sagacious wife and a brand new girl baby, and is played by sexy Denzel Washington: clearly, a hustler with a heart of gold, not to mention a helluva head on his shoulders. And it is in a library, that temple of humanistic learning, that Joe sees the pitiful-looking Andrew boning up on the law—he'll have to represent himself—and notices how other readers recoil from him. So Saul becomes Paul.

The film avoids any closer examination of homosexuality, or even AIDS, and hurries to become a courtroom

Mr. Simon is NR's film critic.

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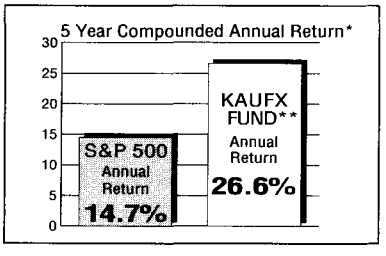

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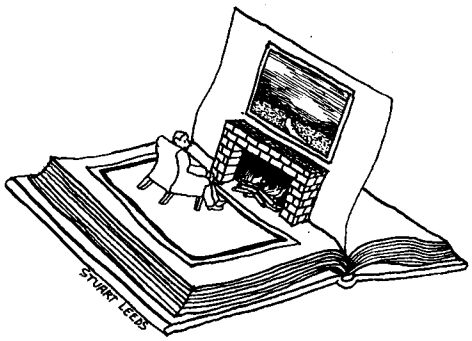
drama, which everyone can have good, wholesome fun with. To be sure, Andrew has a boyfriend, but that is as much as we learn about his lifestyle. Who is this companion, named Miguel Alvarez? He is sort of a painter, and is played by Antonio Banderas, perhaps the hottest of heterosexual Latin lovers on the current screen. It is not clear how he makes his living, where he comes from, or how he met Andrew—Heaven forfend that the movie should soil its hands with a scene in a gay bar. The relationship between Andrew and Miguel, as shown, could be that between two devoted brothers or, later, a sick man and his empathetic nurse.

Andrew's other relationships are equally sanitized. His loving mother knows all about his illness and is as understanding as his doctor—also a woman. When his father and his siblings and their spouses learn about his condition and lawsuit, they are all models of love, supportiveness, and pride, as if Andrew had received some great but controversial award. He is dandling a tiny niece on his knees as he and his extended family renew, as it were, their familial vows. It never crosses the mind of the dandled child's mother to worry, however supererogatorily, about possible infection, nor does Andrew's crude-looking father utter so much as one ambiguous word. This family reunion could have been painted by Norman Rockwell. Needless to say, they all love Miguel, too.

But what about Andrew's law firm? Well, its patriarch and linchpin, Charles Wheeler, is played by Jason Robards, who specializes in Crusty Old Men, Lovable, but here plays a Crusty Old Man, Hateful. This is good casting, for it proves how vicious even the best and most tailored among us can get when AIDS rears its head. The properly Philadelphian partners are solidly united against Andrew, except for one who wants to be decent, but fear silences his humanity. He is played by the well-known off-off-Broadway actor Ron Vawter, who looks less clean-cut than the rest—midway between stuffy and scruffy, which is how, in the movies, one recognizes incipient humanity in a lawyer.

It is all slide-rule casting. The good mother is the lovable and oh, so liberal Joanne Woodward; the good doctoress is Karen Finley, the performance artist who smears her body with chocolate, and whose NEA grant was revoked and then reinstated. The low-echelon employee who speaks up for Andrew is played by the black performance artist Anna Deavere Smith. Too many noble women and blacks in the film? Mustn't let things look like



PC, so the firm is represented by an unnerving woman lawyer (Mary Steenburgen) who, however, mutters at trial's end about how much she hated this case. And one of her legal adjuncts is a black man, but he never gets to say anything, lest he become too heinous.

But why pursue the mathematical ingenuity of the casting down to its least ramifications if the very lead is played by Tom Hanks, Hollywood's Mr. Lovable himself. The only actor who could have made Andrew even cuter is Robin Williams, but he would probably have done something wild along the line, whereas Hanks keeps him dignified all the way, except for a few slight ironic glints. He gives a very good performance, aided also by losing thirty pounds, and by the excellent makeup of Clark Fullerton, which may be the most honest and disturbing element in the entire movie.

I will mention only one more thing, the scene that even unenthusiastic critics have extolled. After Andrew has thrown a flamboyantly gay party (but gay in the manner of the New Orleans carnival), Joe stays on to discuss tomorrow's courtroom strategy with his host. Andrew, however, puts on one of his beloved operatic discs, something the like of which Joe has never heard: Maria Callas singing "*La mamma morta*" from Giordano's *Andrea Chénier*. And he proceeds to enlighten, civilize, and spiritually transform the culturally underprivileged Joe.

I find this scene tasteless, patronizing, and offensive. Mr. Demme and his scenarist, Ron Nyswaner, thought they could make Andrew lovable even to macho and black audiences as a fellow who, thanks to his homosexuality, has discovered the treasure trove of opera, and is now sharing his wealth with the less privileged. The scene is dawdled over, bedizened with fancy camera angles, and finally bathed in brazen scarlet light as Andrew dances around with his IV bottle for a partner. Homosexuals, it implies, have something wonderful to impart to the rest of us ignorant slobs. Yet Giordano's opera is one of the worst ever to make it into the standard repertoire, and Miss Callas's rendition is hammy. Andrew's glowingly passionate explication of "*La mamma morta*" is comparable to someone's spreading literary culture by lecturing on Danielle Steele.

According to Ron Nyswaner, Mr. Demme's motto is, "Let's entertain, and let's be truthful, and let's be bold." *Philadelphia* does poorly by the first, worse by the second, and miserably by the third.

■ In the rush of year's-end blockbusters, it is easy for a small, worthwhile movie to get lost in the shuffle. I don't want to make large claims for ***Wrestling Ernest Hemingway***, a modest

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little film written by Steve Conrad, 21 when he started work on it. Eschewing alike high adventure and low sex, it is about two antithetical old duffers: Frank, a ribald former sea captain, who claims to have once wrestled Ernest Hemingway; and Walt, a retired, prissy Hispanic barber who idealizes unattainable women. Somehow, the two find friendship in their monotonously sun-drenched sunset days in stifling Saint Petersburg, Florida.

Sure, this is somewhat formulaic: the odd couple that goes from mutual contempt to respect and learning from each other. Meanwhile Frank, a former womanizer, tries pitifully for belated conquests with Georgia, a lonely former belle haunting the same movie house he does; and Helen, the middle-aged manager of the apartment complex in which he has a small flat. Walt, who has not had much luck with women, nurses a pathetic crush on a sweet young waitress, Elaine, who eventually follows a young man out of town but not until she has, for a long time, been the goddess dispensing the same two daily sandwiches to Walt: one to be consumed on the spot, the other later, while he pores over his newspaper on a public bench.

Much in the film remains unanswered, and much may be milked for not undeserved, but slightly facile, sympathy: Frank's desperate attempt to love his unloving son, Walt practicing his ballroom dancing by himself against the day when he will venture to that "big" dance and meet women. And the death of one of the men is turned into a somewhat glib *coup de théâtre*. But much of it is solid stuff: the deadly geriatric loneliness amid green palms and blue waters, the misfiring attempts at sex, the living in memories that are merely fantasies.

Richard Harris is splendid as Frank; Robert Duvall, as Walt, is even better. Sandra Bullock is the last word in warm-hearted waitresses, and Shirley MacLaine gives a fine, tough, humane performance as the wary Helen. Randa Haines has directed with equal feeling for the place and the people who inhabit these sunny, empty streets leading nowhere. And the great Hungarian cinematographer Lajos Koltai has shot it all with properly bleached-out, yet somehow indomitable colors. For those with not unreasonable expectations, the film holds heartening rewards. □

SOUND ON DISC

The Truth about Verdi

RALPH ROBERT TOLEDANO

MUCH nonsense has been written about Giuseppe Verdi, right down to the critic Edward Dent, who could look down his nose in the 1920s and write about "barrel-organ tunes that excited our ancestors to laughter or disgust." He was referring to *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata*, and presumably to *Nabucco*, which contributed mightily to driving foreign rulers off Italian soil. Verdi himself, who could inveigh strongly against sopranos, tenors, and managers, remained calm over this kind of criticism, collecting his royalties and saying, "*Il tempo deciderà*." Dent must have had one of the barrel-organ monkeys sitting on his head when he dismissed *La Traviata*, an opera in the great Italian style that stemmed from Monteverdi.

Verdi was criticized by some for the great outpouring of melody in his operas and for his "failure" to balance orchestra against voices. It is true that for the most part the orchestra is secondary to the singers and the arias in his early works. But that presumably was what opera was about until Wagner, to the delight of the German burghers, reversed the process. How audiences today respond to *La Traviata* can be measured by the performance recording of the Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala, conducted by Riccardo Muti (Sony S2K 52 486). If any in the audience were sleeping off dinner, they must undoubtedly have been awakened by the rousing applause. For here all that is appealing in Verdi has been wrapped together masterfully, and though Tiziana Fabbricini and Roberto Alagna are no Renata Tebaldi or Ferruccio Tagliavini, they are strong enough to carry it off.

With maturity, Verdi's orchestral palette became richer, and the interpretive demands on singers and conductors greater. When his *Don Carlo* failed in Paris but was a success in London, he would say that rhythm was the core of that opera—"but rhythm is a dead letter for the performers at the [Paris] *Opéra*." But his greater reliance on the orchestra, perhaps as his lyricism waned, brought charges that he had succumbed to Wagner's influence. In fact, *Don Carlo* was moving in the direction of the textured *Otello*, Verdi's greatest and most balanced work. We have *Don Carlo* now, too, in the version of James Levine, perhaps the leading operatic conductor today, and the Metropolitan Opera, featuring Michael Sylvester and Aprile Millo (Sony S3K 52 500). Levine is well aware that, to Verdi, opera was not a vehicle for the diva, but the diva a vehicle for the score. And listening, you never have to ask, "Did the tenor have heartburn?"

■ It is not as great a leap as you might think from Verdi to Noël Coward, for both dealt with the culture at hand. For Coward, that culture was the music hall, the vapors of the international set, and the flighty sophistication of the London stage. He was active in every phase of what we today call "show business," though his one really good film, *The Scoundrel*, is totally forgotten. Just what Noël Coward contributed is packed together in four CDs of his entire output for the British label HMV. "Mad Dogs and Englishmen," "Mrs. Worthington," the brittle and rococo scenes with Gertrude Lawrence from *Private Lives*, and the many songs he seemed to write almost *ad libitum*—they are all here in this wonderful collection. Missing is Coward's clever and still topical rewrite of Cole Porter's lyrics for "Let's Do It." *The Master's Voice: Noël Coward, 1928–1953* (Angel/EMI 54919 20) is not only a tribute to a great talent but a slice of an era.

Noël Coward represented the apotheosis of a time and an attitude. The American musical comedy, which grew out of the operetta, Tin Pan Alley, and the New York *Geist*, developed its voice and beat in the period after 1920. It was robust, original, tuneful, and irreverent, until it began to take itself too seriously—admitting Leon-

Mr. Toledano is an NR *contributing editor and the author of 19 books.*

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ard Bernstein, yet. The catalogue of its successes and its impact is long. Run through the music and the lyrics of the Gershwins, of Rodgers & Hart, of Harold Arlen, and of Cole Porter, and you will find much of urban America in a native musical form.

The record companies are now systematically reissuing the great old musicals—or at least those that were fortunate enough to be inscribed in original-cast recordings. I have mentioned some of these, but I add to the list the Vivien Leigh/Jean Pierre Aumont *Tovarich* (Angel ZDM 6489322) and *Cabin in the Sky* with the 1963 revival cast (Angel ZDM 6489223). *Tovarich* produced no great or lasting songs but rejoiced in a lively book. *Cabin* had a first-rate score by Vernon Duke (a/k/a Vladimir Dukelsky in his mode as a "serious" composer), with lyrics by John La-Touche. It included "Taking a Chance on Love" and "Honey in the Honeycomb"—songs that have gone into the category of standards. In this revival of the all-black musical the cast gives a rousing performance.

■ Jussi Björling's album *Opera Arias and Songs, Vol. II* (EMI Classics 6407), brings back one of the great voices of an era whose standards were far higher than those that obtain today in the important opera houses. He was also a musician, in striking contrast to the bellowing Pavarotti. Many years ago, I encouraged battle among my friends by playing the *Ingemisco* from the Verdi *Requiem* in competing versions by Björling and Beniamino Gigli—the one singing with classical purity and constraint and the other with the throbs and vibratos characteristic of Italian operatic voices. We never agreed where the greater virtue lay. In this collection you will find the *Ingemisco* along with operatic standards culled from Verdi, Mascagni, Bizet, Gounod, etc., and perhaps agree that Jussi Björling could let the notes convey emotion without editorial comment.

■ For years I have prayed that recording companies and concert-hall programs would let you know what they meant by "piano." The instrument has moved from the fortepiano that replaced the harpsichord to today's brilliant grand, each progression offering advantages and disadvantages. The great Viennese pianist Paul Badura-Skoda always employs the piano that matches the period of the music he is playing, giving us insights into scores that lose part of themselves on a concert grand. You will realize this fully listening to Mr. Badura-Skoda's recording of Beethoven's Opus III, whose difficulties to soloist and listener diminish on the instrument for which it was written. By way of comparison, take Haydn's Piano Concertos in F, G, and D Major, as recorded by Emanuel Ax and the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra (Sony SK 48383). This is lovely and finely constructed music, Haydn to the core, but the modern piano destroys the interplay with the orchestra, and Mr. Ax unfairly seems to be at fault.

But give Mr. Ax Liszt's Sonata in B Minor (Sony 48 484), and he reaches us as the composer would have wanted. Like many of Liszt's compositions for solo piano, the B Minor sonata has an improvisatory quality and an onrush of themes that are never developed, but it has a conquering élan which Mr. Ax catches. How pianistic and yet how different are Debussy's carefully crafted and introspective *Préludes* and *Images*, included in *Debussy: Complete Works for Solo Piano*, of which this is the first volume (Sony SK 52 583). Paul Crossley's traversal is perhaps too respectful, but he still conveys that quality of Parisian light and shadow which Debussy captured. □

DELECTATIONS

Kitchens Need McCarthy

DIGBY ANDERSON

MOST cook books are written by Communists for Communists. And indeed most cooks are thoroughgoing Stalinists. The books and the cooks both seem to imagine that successful cooking happens as follows: The cook sits in her drawing room planning a dinner

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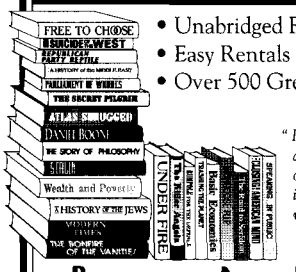

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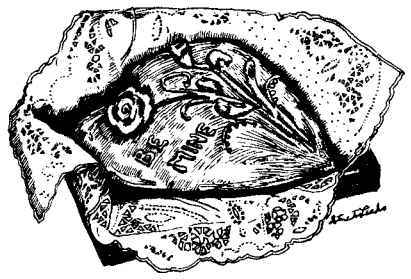
party. She reaches behind her and pulls from the bookcase a cook book. Her fingers leaf through the pages until she lights on a recipe or two she thinks would be nice: some cold asparagus to start, with aioli; then a bonito roast with a light, freshly made tomato sauce—there's a glossy photo of a bonito all silver and black lying on a deep green glazed dish which particularly attracts her attention. For the meat course, leg of beef stewed in red wine with olives and some olive-oil-fried bread to mop up the rich gravy. There is no photo of the beef stew but there is a reproduction of a nineteenth-century French recipe in both Provençal and English versions, both in charmingly antique script.

The cook—let's call her Rosa—reads on to see how detailed the Plan is. Sure enough the recipe writers have carefully listed all the ingredients and take Rosa through all the stages of its implementation. These stages are invariably described as "easy." The writers assure Rosa that as long as she follows the Plan and its Stages, the result will be as described and pictured in the book. Rosa then stretches forward and picks up a writing pad. Deliberately and meticulously she copies the list of ingredients from the book onto her pad. Then off she goes to buy them.

The asparagus in the market is tasteless Californian. Better sorts from other places are either out of season or sold out. Worse, even Rosa can see the base of the stems are beginning to go off: they are soft and squidgy to the touch, and a yellowish juice oozes out. The bonito is not so bad. It could be fresher. The eyes are dull and the gills darkish and the body rather limp, but it doesn't actually smell off. Perhaps when cooked and displayed on a particularly fine green glazed dish and offset against the fresh tomato sauce, it might look somewhat like the photo? However there is a more serious problem. These bonito are rather small. Rosa does not want two or three little ones. The photo showed an imposing big one—just right as a centerpiece for Rosa's big table. Ah! Over there, that's a big one. What a relief.

It is the fishmonger who spoils it. "I see, madam, you don't want it in steaks, you want to keep it whole and cook it in the oven. Are you sure it will fit?" Rosa is not sure. She does not know the exact dimensions of the oven. It ought to fit. The one in the photo fitted.

She takes it home. It does not fit. Mr. Rosa cuts the head off and they cook head and body side by side and



try to reassemble the bonito when cooked. But the head keeps rolling over and a brownish liquid seeps from the head and mingles with the tomato sauce. Not at all as in the picture.

It has all the features of Communism: the theoretically conceived Plan, decided upon centrally, which when imposed on local conditions collapses. Here's what a good cook—say, Joseph—does. He leaves the house with no fixed plan. He might have an odd idea based on practical considerations such as avoiding what he gave the guests last time and using fish and vegetables in season. The odd idea might include exactly the same dishes as Rosa's grand Plan but look at the difference in practice. The asparagus is indeed pretty poor. But next to it are some extremely cheap eggplants. They are blemished, but that would not matter if he removed the blemishes, roasted them, took out the flesh, and mashed it with olive oil and capers to make a splendid eggplant "caviar." Because he is a good cook, he carries recipes in his head and remembers he will need to buy some capers. No bonito, but there are some fish heads the Chinese haven't spotted. What about a fish soup? Have I got saffron at home? Some Parmesan for grating? Excellent. And the fishmonger has salmon roes. They could be de-membraned, salted, and washed out, then served as another "caviar" alongside the eggplant. So where does that leave us? Roes and eggplant to start, then a fish soup. That means the beef stew must go. Can't have one bath after another, and anyway the soup needs croutons with rouille, so we can't have fried bread with the beef. Since we've augmented the first course, we could do with a slightly less robust meat course. Why not a few of those kidneys sauteed with mushrooms? Done. Back home for the cooking, the easy bit.

Communism does not work in the kitchen any more than in economies. It is improvisation and practice that count, not recipe knowledge. Piling up more recipe books is no answer. The conservative philosopher Michael Oakeshott pointed out, "The cookery book is not an independently generated beginning from which cooking can spring . . . it is the stepchild not the parent of the activity . . . it speaks only to those who know already the kind of thing to expect from it and consequently how to interpret it." Stick that on the kitchen wall, and alongside it Jane Grigson's "I used to think . . . that salvation lay in improved cookery. Now I conclude salvation lies in shopping."

You can throw away at least three quarters of the books. Unless you are prepared to *become* a good cook and shopper by constant habit and practice, you might as well give up. □

Mr. Anderson is food columnist for The Spectator *(London) and the author of* The Spectator Book of Imperative Cooking.

LOOKING BACK

Land of Shadows

JAMES COMO

WHO in the world would have guessed that when C. S. Lewis made a Comeback—a return to the status of popcult star, 46 years after his appearance on the cover of *Time* magazine—it would be as the hero in, of all things, a movie? A movie, yet, that tells "one of the greatest love stories of the twentieth century"? Lewis died thirty years ago, on November 22, 1963, and what Hollywood calls a "based upon" constitutes the major commemoration of the anniversary of that death.

The story of a monotony-loving Oxbridge don and his liaison with a

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middle-aged American divorcee, Joy Gresham, seems an unlikely object of mass-audience interest. But we now have *Shadowlands*—again. The story had a successful run as a Broadway play a few years ago, and later was a television movie. Now it is reincarnated as a Major Motion Picture, a "fact-based" biography with rather shaky relations to those facts. So please forgive the impertinence if I recall that 15 years ago I predicted: "We may soon expect that C. S. Lewis will become an established figure . . . so that people who know little will assume much."

When on June 30 I visited the film company on location at Magdalen College, Oxford, I learned that Brian Sibley's screenplay (later a book, 1985), was "too documentary" for the BBC, which originated the idea, and so was rejected in favor of William Nicholson's version. I spoke with only one person, Nicholson himself, who did not either confess or proclaim a near-total ignorance of Lewis's life story. Nicholson told me that Lewis was a man who, until Joy came along when he was in late middle age, was "afraid of commitments" and quite unable to make any. Therefore nothing should "dilute the intensified love story," as he put it. The stage and film producer Brian Eastman told me it was this motif and its attendant emotional wallop that moved him to bring the script to Sir Richard Attenborough's attention. In movieland, of course, the central crisis of Lewis's life—his conversion to Christianity—would be no more than alluded to. DeMille is dead, after all, and *The Song of Bernadette* is no longer bankable.

That still left various possibilities open. Would the movie be about redemptive suffering, I wondered? Or the pilgrimage of (as I see her) a manipulative and determined, complex and brilliant woman who, over the course of seven years (not two, an unfortunate concision in the movie) is converted quite thoroughly into what at first she merely longed to become? Or would it be about "shadowlands" (our losses here can be not only unbearably painful but crippling to faith; and yet they are as shadows, no match for the promise of the Light to come)? In fact, the movie is relentlessly simplified: Man of simplistic faith meets candid woman, man and woman fall in love and marry, woman dies, man grieves but bravely carries on, his smugness chastened, his eschaton immanentized. One remembers that the final cause of a movie is, after all, the healthiest possible bottom line. People, a lot of people, have to come, and they have to "get it," and they must tell other people about it; and so the "it" can be only so demanding.

I cannot begin to guess why the words "this is a true story" appear on the screen, in place of the words "based upon"—as Nicholson avowed the movie to be. Truth, however, *does* reside in the performance of Sir Anthony Hopkins. Attenborough rightly told me that Lewis "was not the Jeremy Irons type, as it were, effete and aesthetic, [but] more of a butcher, a second row Welsh forward." And Hopkins brings to the role a virility that shows Lewis as the *Mensch* he was. In Oxford Hopkins seemed tired. At our interview in New York he appeared much more forceful. In the film, a paunch is prominent; in person, one is more aware of the large, well-muscled chest. With a grey stubble, very short-cropped grey hair, and a steely, blue-eyed gaze flowing from beneath a lowering brow, Hopkins seemed hard, almost thuggish.

In fact he is anything but thuggish. Soft-spoken and self-effacing, possessed of a keen sense of proportion about his industry and his craft, Hopkins is sympathetic to Lewis off screen as well as on. His impatience bordered on anger when I read out to him an ugly quotation about Lewis attributed to him in print. I dare not (and would not) repeat it: the Hopkins Death Stare made me fear for my liver. He not only denied it but went on to praise Lewis, adding, "Jack was no more repressed than any other man." So, acting genius aside, Anthony Hopkins is the right man. His parting gift to his young co-actor, Joey Mazzello (who plays Douglas Gresham, Joy's son), was Lewis's *The Four Loves*. "He told me," Mazzello said, " 'Don't read this now, but *do* read it when you get older.' " But for Hopkins, we would very likely have gotten a Lewis who as his cynical Oxford friend Christopher charges in the movie, had "easy answers to difficult questions."

Debra Winger, prevailing over the underwritten role of Joy, did much research, including wearing a 1950s-style bra for weeks at a time and making a two-day trip to the Wade Collection, a repository of Lewis papers at Wheaton College. She got some facts wrong, and when I corrected one she tried out her own death stare—a happy moment of fixed attention for this longtime admirer. But she got much more right than wrong, including her undiluted denial of Christopher's charge. Her answer is worth quoting in full:

> He may make difficult *questions* accessible. I don't think he makes the answers easy. I don't think he answers questions. I think he discusses them. He's in that school of discourse where his statements are not like books that are written by experts. He's saying, "Think about this." That's why I think he opened [Christianity] up to so many people. He wasn't dogmatic.

Would that the script took that same position more consistently than it does. Instead, we see, recurringly, a lecturing Lewis repeating from one platform to another that "pain is God's megaphone." His docile and eager listeners—mostly middle-aged women thrilled to have him among them—lap up a phrase which to the viewer becomes increasingly facile, especially after Joy is stricken by cancer and Lewis by Irony. The phrase is from chapter six of *The Problem of Pain*: "But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world. . . ." So far so good, notwithstanding the absence of immediate context and the falsehood of the screen Lewis's tire-

Mr. Como teaches rhetoric at York College in New York City and is the editor of C. S. Lewis at the Breakfast Table.

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some reiteration of the theme. But 12 pages later in the chapter the real Lewis wrote:

> You would like to know how I behave when I am experiencing pain, not writing books about it. You need not guess, for I will tell you; I am a great coward. When I think of pain . . . it "quite o'ercrows my spirit." . . . I am not arguing that pain is not painful. Pain hurts. That is what the word means. I am only trying to show that the old Christian doctrine of being made "perfect through suffering" is not incredible. To prove it palatable is beyond my design.

In the preface he wrote, "For the higher task of teaching fortitude and patience I was never fool enough to suppose myself qualified." But in movieland, Lewis must be lessoned, as an adjunct to the "intensified love story." Miss Winger, where were you when William Nicholson needed you?

Walter Hooper, literary advisor to C. S. Lewis Pte. Ltd., is right when he says, "There is now a wide gap between the mythology of C. S. Lewis and the facts of his life. *Shadowlands* is a beautiful addition to the mythology but it should be taken as a dessert—it must be combined with the meat and potato *facts*." Lewis himself would have loathed the idea of any film biography with him as its subject, and I could almost agree: no film about him could fully satisfy most of his debtors, and this one could have been better even on its own terms. Almost agree, but not quite. For it will surely encourage people who never read him to do so; and those who only knew *of* him will now have some inkling of why he is worth knowing about. In addition to being walloped, we may be improved.

So after you have seen the movie, read the books. Like the rest of us, Lewis is eternal: we are all, as he wrote in "The Weight of Glory," "possible gods and goddesses. . . . There are no *ordinary* people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilization—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat." But unlike most of our works, Lewis's legacy of living and of thinking and of expression is, thirty years after his death, perpetually fresh. And in five years we will not commemorate his death and our loss, but celebrate the centenary of his birth. I, for one, cannot wait for the jubilation—including the cinematic prequels. Meanwhile, those who are so disposed might pray for the soul of this great man and for the souls of those he loved so well. □

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Private Parts, by Howard Stern (Simon & Schuster, 446 pp., $23)

THE SECRET of Howard Stern's success is that he doesn't deserve it. If he were better looking, better bred, or more intelligent than any of his fans, as most successful people are, the fans would promptly disown him. It is precisely the rarity of someone as ordinary as themselves attaining such prominence that excites their patronage. Most of the millions of readers of this tell-all autobiography could have written something like it themselves if only they had had the courage or shamelessness. But since they didn't, the fact that their anger and their preoccupations are externalized in the slouching, post-pubescent gangliness of Mr. Stern fills them with a feeling of joyous vindication against a universe more talented than themselves. Everything Mr. Stern reveals about his life, from birth to pimply high-school days to college debauchery, is entirely undistinguished. Only when he hits the air waves does his insatiable appetite for suburbanized abjection distinguish him from the rest of mankind. This poorly written and edited memoir ranks, therefore, as something of a milestone in human events, though whether of the rise of Everyman or the decline of the West is not yet clear. —JAMES GARDNER

Sexy Dressing etc.: Essays on the Power and Politics of Cultural Identity, by Duncan Kennedy (Harvard, 258 pp., $24.95)

THIS is a collection of some essays by the celebrated Harvard legal scholar Duncan Kennedy. Only one of the essays deals with legal issues; the others are general discussions of affirmative action, the meaning of women's dress, and the nature of radical scholarship. In all of these the author denies the existence of public reality, since he believes the world view of individuals is determined by their gender, race, etc. Of course, the author never asks why his arguments have general validity in a world where nothing else does. Like so many others of his persuasion, Mr. Kennedy also maintains that all approaches to scholarship are ideological, even those which simply assert that the pursuit of knowledge is desirable. Perhaps in some ultimate sense this is true, but we must discriminate among things in order to communicate intelligibly. In the title essay, the author tells us that women universally wear dresses and men wear pants because dresses provide easier access to a woman's genitals than pants do to a man's. Thus dress codes emphasize women's vulnerability. Tell that to the Scots or the Romans. And think about the relative difficulty of gaining access to a man's or woman's genitals in Victorian England, given the layers of skirts (and hoops) worn by women. This book boggles the mind. Duncan Kennedy has tenure? Harvard University Press published it? My God!

—STANLEY ROTHMAN

A Drinking Life: A Memoir, by Pete Hamill (Little, Brown, 265 pp., $21.95)

PETE HAMILL, a New York tabloid reporter and columnist born and bred in Brooklyn, has produced a vivid and enthralling set of recollections of his youth and early manhood. The book's only real failure, awkwardly, is in what purports to be its pretext: plainly Mr. Hamill doesn't really understand his own drinking, or the role of booze in his many milieux, nearly well enough to write about it. Time and again, a wonderfully nice passage—on his childhood readings, his high-school affairs, the crowd at the late Fifties *New York Post*, or the star status enjoyed by his crippled father in the local saloons—is marred by a painfully obvious comment or some bit of psychobabble. But the passages themselves triumph: casually powerful descriptions of life in postwar Brooklyn and Manhattan, when the one was ethnic and the other magic. Such charms carry a story that could easily have been deadly dull, enlivening the unexceptional experiences of an escapist child, troubled teen, and angry young man. A "tough liberal," Mr. Hamill is a colorless pedant when explaining life—and a fine craftsman when describing it.

—MARK CUNNINGHAM

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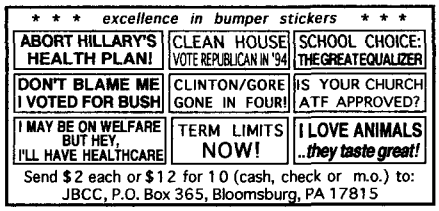
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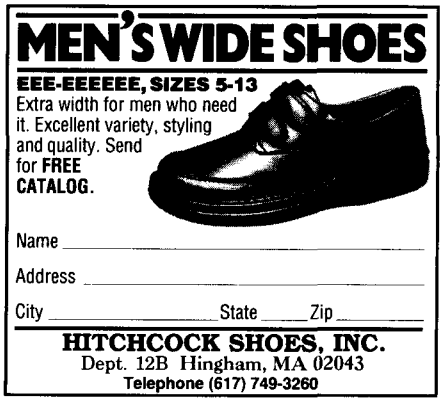
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TRANS-O-GRAM / Kem Putney

1 F	2 N	3 J	4 B		5 H	6 E	7 C		8 J	9 D	10 I	11 L	12 A		13 F	14 T		15 J	16 H	
17 Q		18 S	19 B	20 P		21 N	22 J	23 D	24 H		25 U	26 F	27 O		28 H	29 M	30 I	31 G	32 J	
	33 D	34 N	35 C	36 T	37 O		38 B	39 A	40 L	41 Q	42 G	43 F	44 I	45 E		46 J		47 D	48 A	
49 K	50 C	51 N		52 U	53 O	54 E	55 G	56 J	57 F	58 H	59 O		60 T	61 A	62 G	63 S	64 D	65 M		
66 I	67 J		68 G	69 Q	70 E	71 U	72 H		73 C	74 K	75 A	76 B		77 P	78 N	79 B	80 L	81 R	82 T	
83 E		84 B	85 S	86 J	87 D	88 N	89 Q	90 A	91 U		92 H	93 F	94 L	95 D	96 M	97 B	98 K	99 Q	100C	
	101P	102H		103O	104J	105F		106E	107B	108P		109M	110I		111O	112F	113T		114K	
115N	116M	117I	118T	119L	120C		121E	122Q	123L	124I	125H	126B	127R	128G	129C		130G	131N	132U	
133O		134R	135D	136G	137B	138S	139K	140T	141P	142A		143H	144T	145M	146C	147O	148D	149J	150A	
	151M	152E	153S	154B		155A	156Q	157G	158D	159J	160I	161C	162P	163L	164F	165M				

DEFINITIONS

A. Super!
61 39 90 142 48 150 12 155 75

B. Mickey Moused, sheepishly
126 79 84 137 4 107 97 76 38 19

154

C. Newspaper watchdogs
50 161 73 35 120 129 100 7 146

D. Italo-Swiss pyramidal peak
47 23 95 9 158 64 33 148 135 87

E. Skinflint
83 121 70 6 54 106 152 45

F. Literary-sounding suburb of L.A.
43 112 1 164 26 13 93 57 105

G. Capable
128 68 62 136 42 31 130 157 55

H. Coven's work
28 125 72 92 16 143 24 58 102 5

I. Mien
10 110 66 30 160 124 117 44

J. Directional-sounding school in D.C.
159 67 86 15 104 32 46 8 3 22

56 149

K. Mecca trekker
114 74 139 49 98

L. Ask
94 163 123 40 80 11 119

M. Amoral sort, on principle
116 145 29 109 151 96 165 65

N. Circular motion
78 21 51 115 88 2 34 131

O. Jerry Lewis effort
147 37 59 27 103 111 133 53

P. Street with limited options
101 141 162 20 77 108

Q. Asses
122 89 156 41 69 17 99

R. Brooch
134 127 81

S. Chili ingredient
85 153 138 63 18

T. Always thinking of others
113 140 144 14 118 60 82 36

U. Like Def. E.
132 52 91 71 25

DIRECTIONS

The object of TRANS-O-GRAM is to fill in the puzzle diagram by guessing the words from their definitions, and transferring each letter of the guessed word to the correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. When the diagram is filled in it will spell out a quotation from some published work (reading normally from left to right, black boxes indicating the ends of words); also, when the words have all been filled in above, their initial letters will spell out the author and title of the quoted work. The acrostic feature, and the relative word-lengths in the diagram, will assist in the solution. Spelling and definitions on the authority of *Webster's Deluxe Unabridged Dictionary*, Second Edition.

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Is Mr. Clinton Culturally Integrated?

NEW YORK, JANUARY 10

My ex-colleague Mr. Garry Wills (he was on the right side for the first ten years of his public life, whereupon he grew sideburns and took a doctorate in radicalization) writes in the *New York Times* about President Clinton in order to discover the meaning of the First Year. He does so with the enthusiasm of a discoverer who sets eyes on a new world and, self-evidently, does not heed the signs that it would be both prudent and wise to turn back. He says it in a single paragraph:

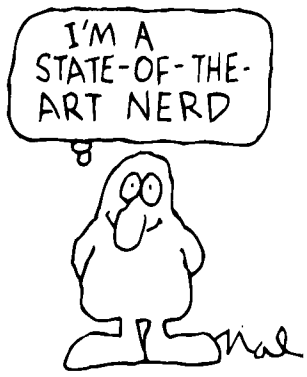
"The Republican hold on the White House was a cultural fact of odd significance. It occurred at the very time when the country was undergoing a profound social revolution. Look, today, at the status of achieving women, elected black officials, open homosexuals, single mothers, unwed couples, women having legal abortions, uncensored movies and magazines. There is no one who does not have friends or family members engaged in what, a quarter of a century ago, was a rare or embarrassing social activity. Yet term after term we elected Presidents who tried to ignore or turn back this avalanche of social change."

The difficulty in the planted axiom—that the President of the United States ought to be acculturated by major trends within the country over which he presides as Chief Executive—would appear to be obvious. Surely a nation isn't really better off hospitable to social trends unless such trends are wholesome.

Mr. Wills dumps a great deal into his basket of social reality, and by no means should it be supposed that all of it is unwelcome. There is no case whatever to be made against "achieving women," and it strains the memory to come up with any evidence that Nixon–Reagan–Bush opposed encouraging women's achievements. But two distinctions are in order. The first is that we should not encourage a society in which only women who work, and who achieve public recognition, are women who are thought of as living admirable lives. Those who do not choose to work, and who live in families that do not require them to work, should not be thought of as parasites or underachievers. And women who are brought into office, whether to Congress or the Supreme Court, primarily because they are women can legitimately be criticized as out of place.

Elected black officials are welcome—provided they exercise their responsibilities effectively and conscientiously. Exactly as much can be said for elected white officials. There are two important developments in this field in the years in question: the advent of black officials, and the solidarity of the enfranchised black vote. It is fine when a black prevails in a robust election, not fine when the voters are drawn to him primarily, or exclusively, because he is black. It is bad news, not good news, that 97 per cent of black New Yorkers voted for Mr. Dinkins. Such phenomena breed not democratic confidence in the rise of the political strength of a minority, but despair and even contempt for the superstitions of tribalism.

Is the "open homosexual" a welcome development? It is probably too soon to pass final judgment on the point. The events of the past twenty years reflect imbalances on both sides. One was the kind of gay bashing one associates with the bullying instinct in human nature that once indulged itself with such revelry as the Ku Klux Klan's. The complementary imbalance is the exorbitant demands here and there of gay lobbies insisting, e.g., on their right to march as



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discrete units in the St. Patrick's Day parade, presuming to override a code generally accepted as rooted in biological nature. The handicapped ought to be treated with dignity and with compassion, but it cannot be concealed that they are handicapped.

What exactly is it that one is grateful to Mr. Clinton for, on the matter of single mothers, unwed couples, and women having legal abortions? The riot of illegitimacy is the capital disorder of modern times, and it is not unrelated to the riot of crime. What is it that Mr. Clinton does that marks him as hospitable to this trend? Surely his enthusiasts do not mean to suggest that his own behavior as a libertine makes him an integrated member of the new social order?

Or *is* that what they are saying? That to be a modern, convincing, unstuffy, un-Republican President, one needs to be a disciple of the Playboy philosophy? To expect the leader of a country to be a saint is angelism—dumb; a waste of time; unrealistic. But to hail a leader to the extent that he considers himself a part of the culture that disdains higher counsels of behavior tells us something about the undeveloped thought of the enthusiast, and the undeveloped morals of the intended honoree. □

Starting Again In California

NEW YORK, JANUARY 7

Close your eyes (please) and think back to the situation thirty years ago (if you are over thirty; if not, kindly use your imagination). There is a huge fight going on in Congress over a civil-rights bill sponsored by Senator Hubert Humphrey. He wants to declare it illegal to discriminate against American citizens simply because of their color. On the other side of the aisle, Senator Barry Goldwater says very convincingly that he abhors racial discrimination (he did not permit it when he was involved in the Goldwater merchandising enterprise), but that it is nowhere written in the Constitution that if Sam Legree has a fried-chicken restaurant, he can be required to take in customers he doesn't want to take in.

The debate between goes on, and Goldwater charges that, as written, the proposed civil-rights act might be used prejudicially against non-black citizens. Humphrey insists that nothing of the sort will ever grow out of his act, but he consents slightly to alter the language,

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so that now it reads, "Neither the [United States Government] nor any of its political subdivisions or agents shall use race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin as a criterion for either discriminating against, or granting preferential treatment to, any individual or group in the operation of the . . . system of public employment, public education, or public contracting."

Anything wrong with that?

Fast-forward to 1994. If Hubert Humphrey were here, he'd say, No, there is nothing at all wrong with that language. But replace "the United States government" above with "the State of California" and you have what two academics have proposed as an amendment to the California constitution.

When a constitutional initiative is proposed in California, it goes first to the attorney general, who issues a "summary of the chief purpose and points of the proposed measure." In this case, the attorney general advises that if the measure is passed, it will result in the elimination of affirmative-action programs costing "tens of millions of dollars annually," as also student-assistance programs based on race, costing "about $50 million annually." He estimates the money that would be freed up to use in nondiscriminatory aid to education at $120 million or more.

There are two problems, one of them for civil-rights believers of the Humphrey School, the other for those who believe in discrimination. The problem for the Humphrey team is to secure the 616,000 signatures needed to put the initiative on the ballot in November. Conservative resources were greatly depleted by the attempt to promulgate the school voucher system last year, and many activists were demoralized by that initiative's failure.

The liberals' problem is that although most of them are formally opposed to discrimination against people even if they are white and male, there is an activist minority to cope with. The polls show that over 70 per cent of the people nationwide oppose discrimination. But there is a heavy contingent in California, of blacks and Hispanics in particular, who as we can see from the policy analysis above, have got preferential treatment from the act passed in 1964 and its successor acts. The liberal California legislator faces the quite hideous problem of having either to a) back the California Civil Rights Initiative, affirming opposition to discrimination; or b) oppose it—in order to appease ethnic minorities.

Now who would want to force liberal California politicians to speak out of only one side of their mouth? The sponsors of this initiative and, presumably, all the Republicans and the Humphrey-Democrats who believe that current practices are a mutation of what was intended thirty years ago when the great civil-rights bill was passed.

Experts who have looked at the initiative predict that if the money is raised to plant it before the voters in November, a revolution will be effected as resonant as that of Proposition 13, which mobilized the voters against runaway taxation. If the California initiative is passed, meaning will once again be transfused into legislative efforts to eliminate discrimination. Those interested should write to P.O. Box 11795 in Berkeley, California 94701-2795. □

Financing Campaigns: The Hell of It

NEW YORK, JANUARY 5

I have a friend who is embarking on a political career (he is running for governor of New York) and faces the dreadful chore of money-raising. Those of us not running for office tend to forget the awful drain of fund-raising. A drain on time, and a psychological drain for those who simply don't like to ask other people to give them money. It isn't hard to call your neighbor and ask him, please, would he send some money to the Red Cross. It is agonizing to call your neighbor and ask him to give *you* some money.

One of the major reforms, as they are inevitably called, stipulated how much money an individual can give to a federal campaign ($25,000), the idea being to rescue the United States from plutocratic control. The "reform" had two results, one of them foreseeable but not widely foreseen; the second, absolutely unforeseen.

What the maximum campaign contribution has done of course is to make things worse. One congressman who runs in a hotly contested district in California told me that nine out of ten of his public appearances need to be scheduled with a view to fund-raising. In brief, chasing the buck is by far a greater concern of our legislators than it used to be.

The surprise is divulged by the *O'Leary/Kamber Report*, a monthly newsletter. We learn that very few Americans, even among the extremely rich, give as much as they are allowed to give. "Relatively few individuals—78—gave the maximum to candidates for federal office, federal PACs, and political-party committees that support federal candidates. The 'Big Five'—California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Illinois—accounted for roughly two-thirds of this total, with 51 residents 'maxing out.'" Six Republican women gave the maximum, as against two Democratic women. But, interestingly enough, the Democrats collected more in total from their twenty biggest women donors than the Republicans did from theirs. A second feature of the *O'Leary/Kamber Report* reveals the extraordinary indifference to political giving in the wealthiest set. In the list of wealthy Americans, we start with the Walton family, some of whom give more to Republicans, some to Democrats, averaging about $14,000 each. We come then to John Mars—zero, zero (nothing to Republicans, nothing to Democrats). Next to him, Jacqueline Mars Vogel: $550, zero. Sam Newhouse is next: zero, zero. Ditto Donald Newhouse. In a word, the extremely rich are not contributing heavily to politics.

The business of revealing who gives how much induces a little queasiness in those who do not think of ourselves as voyeurs. But, after all, the law is intended to publicize such gifts, so publicity they get, and it is interesting then to note the enterprise of *Roll Call*, which published the contributions of a few dozen writers, and what do you know?—in the list there are exactly four who are contributors to Republican candidates: Tom Clancy, Mark Helprin, P. J. O'Rourke, and—me. Here and there you will find a writer with one Republican beneficiary among a number of Democrats. E.g., Andrew Tobias, to Republican Michael Huffington. And with a very few exceptions—Gloria Steinem is one, Judith Krantz another—the contributions are modest. These folks confer their favors in more valuable tender than a few hundred bucks.

The search for true reform in the system is as endless as the quest for eternal youth. The key is of course term limitation, which would lighten the burden of the challenger. And surely the cost of radio and television time should in moderate amounts be donated by stations that have air time because a channel has been reserved for them, courtesy of the government. Broadcasters invest heavily in their stations and acquire equity in space. But an operating fee would appear to be reasonable. Almost anything appears reasonable compared to the ordeal now visited on anyone who seeks public office. □

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Stayin' Alive

I READ the other day that young people in Los Angeles are lining up for midnight showings of the movie *Saturday Night Fever*. They make a party of it, apparently, costumed in duds plucked from the rack at St. Vincent de Paul. The lime-green leisure suits sport lemon-yellow piping, the floral shirts of synthetic fabric open up to the sternum, and gold pendants swing gaily, as in days of yore, through the chest hair. The girls crown themselves with great flopping coiffures in the manner of Farrah Fawcett-Majors (as she then was known). The news unsettled me. I shuddered as I did a couple of years ago, when a younger friend invited me to a "Seventies Party" in a rented ballroom. I walked in and stopped cold. The sound system blared K.C. and the Sunshine Band. A mirrored ball threw shards of light across the dance floor. There was much giggling and self-congratulation among the youngsters.

Wait a minute, I thought. *This is my life they're being ironic about.*

Well, not *my* life, precisely. I never owned a leisure suit, nor a gold pendant. I thought then, and still do, that (as the famous phrase went) "Disco sucks." But the Seventies were my formative years; I entered the decade a high-school freshman and emerged an aimless college graduate. It is unpleasant to watch a period of your life become the stuff of history, as our pop culture defines history—which is to say the raw material of kitsch. Once derided as a lost decade, the Seventies are now, here in the Nineties, inescapable. David Cassidy tours the country in a re-tooled Partridge Family bus, while a colleague writes a best-selling memoir of his years on *The Brady Bunch*. A moralistic Southern governor preaches from the White House, with one wary eye trained on his bibulous brother. The Village People threaten a comeback. And on and depressingly on.

Pop culture panders to the young, of course, and it does so most successfully by making the not-so-young feel oh-so-old. To me the Seventies seem too close for nostalgia—they seem, in fact, to get closer and more vivid the older I get, which I suppose is a common experience for rapidly aging cranks. I suppose as well that this instantaneous recycling of the recent past is unavoidable, given mass media's bottomless appetite for material. The process has been in motion for some time. Recall that one of the surprise hits at Woodstock, in 1969, was Sha-na-na (not to be confused with our secretary of Health and Human Services), who doo-wopped in T-shirts and ducktails, lampooning an era that had concluded only six years earlier. In the modern age nostalgia zips along so quickly you scarcely have time to feel nostalgic.

And time is what you need, time to idle, for nostalgia is a wallow—the sport of loafers, properly enjoyed sitting down, or better, in bed early of a Saturday morning as the rest of the household sleeps. It's not a mass activity; it's not even an activity. Nostalgia is a private indulgence. Our popular culture offers up merely a simulacrum of nostalgia, which makes it easier for me to resist its entreaties. And I'm compelled to resist; to succumb would be the final signal that I am, in this speeded-up age, a relic. To prove my mettle I got hold of a tape of a recent NBC special called, "A '70s Celebration: The Beat Is Back!" and with a tumbler of Scotch I settled down one evening to watch.

THE SCOTCH came in handy, as the dozen featured performers were trundled out in varying stages of decrepitude: Olivia Newton-John, the Spinners, Donna Summer, the Bee Gees, and of course K.C., who sang his immortal hit "Shake Your Booty." His own booty has grown considerably in the intervening years, and the Sunshine Band fell back in terror as he swung it from side to side. But it was the cast of *The Brady Bunch* whose appearance was most jarring. Now in their thirties, they were still recognizable, though barely. They seemed thicker, distended, as if someone popped a plug in the original kids and pumped them up to twice their normal size. The effect is grotesque. Why do former child stars leave their car dealerships or acting workshops or wherever they go to die and debase themselves in this way? It is a cruel business, the nostalgia industry.

The cruelty, in fact, is the point. "I love it," chirped Olivia Newton-John, "that the kids are making the Seventies hip again." Poor Olivia: still clueless after all these years. The Seventies aren't hip—irony is hip. And it was my generation, along with our older siblings, who concluded, twenty years ago, that an attitude of ironic detachment was under any circumstance the only acceptable pose to strike. The pose has been our legacy, and now we are its victims. All the smirking re-creations of our youth serve us right. At last the joke's on us.

—ANDREW FERGUSON

"Senator, have you stopped harassing your female employees?"

Mr. Ferguson is a senior writer for The Washingtonian.

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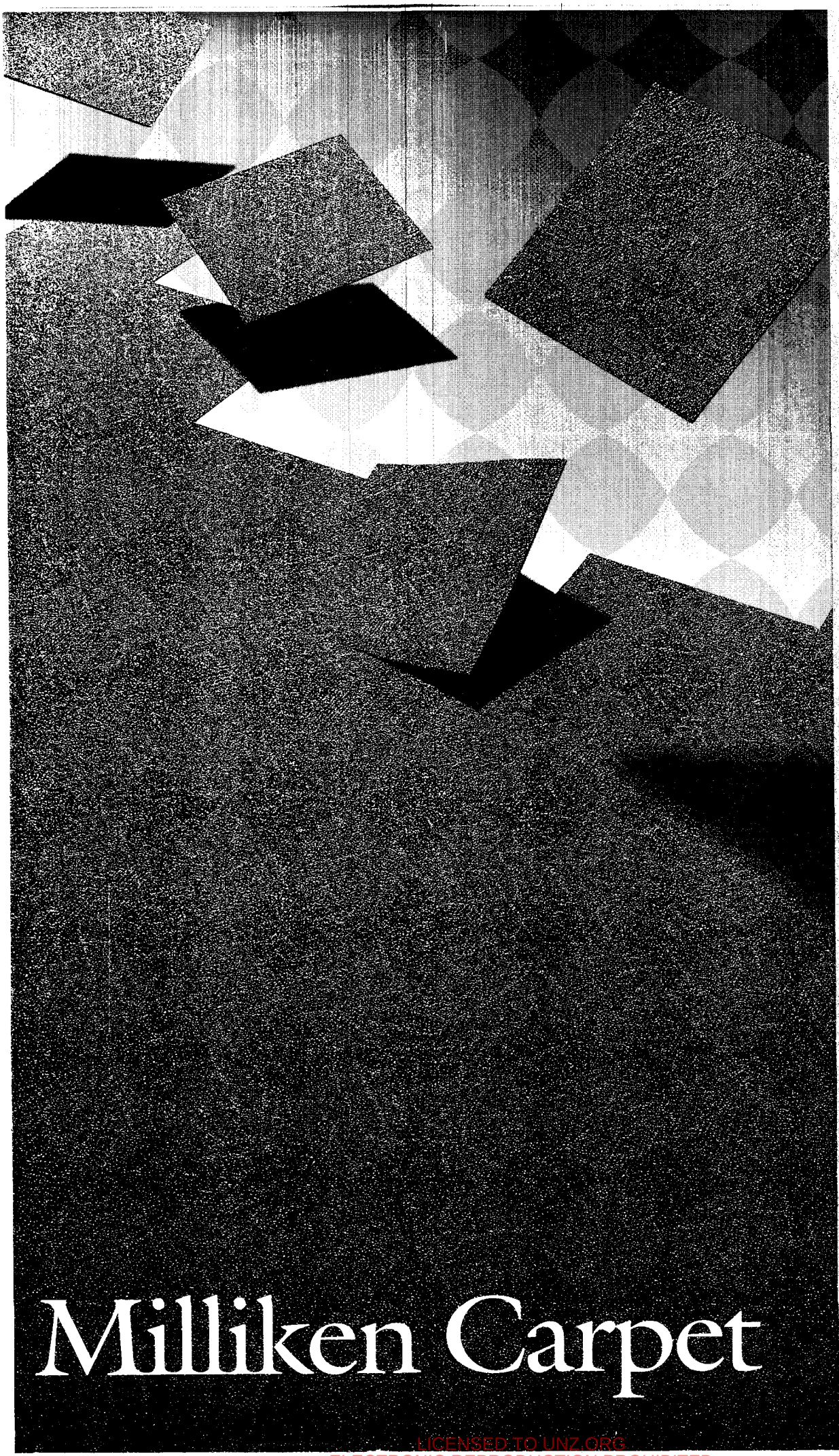

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